

Douglas County News, Number 22, February 24, 1977

Cause still sought for fatal plane crash here

‘So far, we have not found any clues as to what caused the plane crash and our investigation is continuing,’ Bill Parker, a member of the National Transportation Safety Board investigation team, said Tuesday to a telephone inquiry by the NEWS.

The investigation board is still seeking to determine the cause of a light plane crash that was discovered last Wednesday, February 16, approximately 12 miles southeast of Franktown near the Douglas-Elbert County line.

The two victims of the light aircraft crash were identified as Kenneth B. Hanish, 27, of 3840 E. Easter Place, Littleton, and Johnny R. Scrivner, 44, of 5371 W. Rowland Place in Jefferson County. Hanish was the owner and pilot of the orange and white Mooney single engine aircraft and Scrivner, a Frontier Airlines captain, was serving as Hanish’s instructor on the flight originally expected to take about two hours.

The Civil Air Patrol officials said that the two men left Arapahoe County Airport around 9 a.m. Tuesday, Feb. 15, for instrument flight training in the vicinity of the Kiowa visual omni range. When the two men were reported missing and overdue Tuesday night, according to officials of the Colorado Wing of the Civil Air Patrol, a search was started about 4:30 Wednesday morning in the Kiowa area.

The crash site was located by Colorado State Patrolman Ray Peterson shortly before 9 a.m. Peterson was in a State Patrol aircraft on a flight from Arapahoe County Airport to Pueblo when he sighted the wreckage. The wreckage was located in a snow-covered rolling field about three miles east of Highway 83 and 11 miles south of Franktown.

According to a radio report from an aircraft flying over the crash site, the wreckage was confined to a small area and the plane apparently hit the ground at a relatively steep angle. The aircraft was resting on a ridge in a field with the cockpit and main fuselage badly smashed. Its tail was torn off and lay tilted toward the sky. There was no fire in or around the crash site, authorities said.

Reporters and photographers were kept some distance away from the crash site so all evidence could be preserved until investigators from the Federal Aviation Agency and the National Transportation Safety Board arrived on the scene. Members of the Douglas County Sheriff’s Department, Civil Air Patrol and Colorado State Patrol were also on hand at the crash site.

John Andrews, deputy coroner for Douglas County, said one of the victims was found lying on the ground about 30 feet from the aircraft and the other was still in the cockpit. Andrews said both men apparently died on impact.

Investigation by the National Transportation Safety Board to determine the causes of the fatal crash is continuing.