

John B. TAPP

CVA PASSENGERS

DATE: 23 March 1966
BOY STATION: VA 93 on board USS ENTERPRISE (CVA(N)-65)
TYPE OF AIRCRAFT: A4C
MISSION & VOICE CALL: Rolling Thunder Raven 302
TYPE OF MISSION: Armed Recce
LOCATION: At Sea
COORDINATES: Unknown - 174600 10.81300

DESCRIPTION OF INCIDENT:

Enterprise CVA lost radar and radio contact with aircraft nine miles from ship. Aircraft had reported no difficulty prior to loss of contact. Crash scene positively identified with oil slick, pilot's helmet, oxygen tank, electronics equipment from aircraft and parts of drop tank. Datum searched with over 100 percent probability of detection. Results negative. Pilot not considered to have egressed from aircraft. No chance of survival.

NAVAL MESSAGE
OPNAV FORM 1076 (REV 3-61)

RELEASED BY	L D MILLER	DRAFTED BY	G231/DEPRIEST	PHONE EXT NR	42746	PAGE		PAGES	
DATE	23 Mar 1966	TOR/TOD		ROUTED BY		CHECKED BY		OF	
MESSAGE NO		DATE/TIME GROUP (GCT)		PRECEDENCE		FLASH		EMERGENCY	
				ACTION				OPERATIONAL W/M DATE	
				INFO				PRIORITY	
								ROUTINE	
								DEFERRED	

FROM: BUPERS
TO: MRS MARGARET TAPP
DATA
INFO: COMTWELVE

UNCLAS

CONFIRMATION TO PRIMARY NOL TAPP, J B

WESTERN UNION
SENDING BLANK

CALL LETTERS LGG 010 GOVT CHARGE TO CNO
Washington, D. C. 23 Mar 1966 3:50 PM
Mrs Margaret Tapp

SHEET ONE OF TWO
REPORT DELIVERY
DON'T PHONE

DATA

I deeply regret to confirm on behalf of the United States Navy that your husband LCDR John Bethel Tapp, 565678/1310, USN died 23 Mar 1966 at sea as a result of an aircraft accident. It is with further regret that I must advise you that your husband's remains were not recovered. Your husband died while serving his country. I wish to assure you of every possible assistance together with the heartfelt sympathy of myself and your husband's shipmates. A letter from his commanding officer setting forth the circumstances of death will follow. If I can assist you please write or telegraph the Chief of Naval Personnel, Department of the Navy, Washington, D.C. 20370.
(DEATH - no remains - Primary) # 7

Send the above message, subject to the terms on back hereof, which are hereby agreed to

PLEASE TYPE OR WRITE PLAINLY WITHIN BORDER—DO NOT FOLD
1269—(R 4-59)

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NAVAL MESSAGE
OPNAV FORM 10-28 (REV. 3-61)

RELEASED BY L D MILLER	DRAFTED BY G231/DEPRIEST	PHONE EXT. NR 42746	PAGE	PAGES				
DATE 24 Mar 1966	TOR/TOD	ROUTED BY	CHECKED BY	OF				
MESSAGE NR	DATE/TIME GROUP (GCT)	PRECEDENCE	RASH	EMERGENCY	OPERATIONAL IMMEDIATE	PRIORITY	ROUTINE	DEFERRED
	241510Z	ACTION				X		
		INFO						

FROM: BUPERS
 TO: MRS GERTRUDE GASKIN
 DATA
 INFO: CONFIVE
 UNCLAS

WESTERN UNION
SENDING BLANK

CALL LETTERS NRX LGG 016 GOVT	CHARGE TO CNO
DATE/TIME GROUP Washington, D. C. 24 Mar 1966 10:01 AM	REPORT DELIVERY DCMT PHONE
<p>I deeply regret to confirm on behalf of the United States Navy that your son LCDR John Bethel Tapp, 565678/1310, USN died on 23 March 1966 at sea as a result of an aircraft accident.</p> <p>It is with further regret that I must advise you that your son's remains were not recovered. His wife is being notified. It is suggested that you contact her as to details. Your son died while serving his country. I extend to you my sincere sympathy in your great loss.</p> <p>Vice Admiral B. J. Semmes, Jr., Chief of Naval Personnel</p>	

(DEATH - no remains - Secondary) # 8
 Send the above message, subject to the terms on back hereof, which are hereby agreed to

PLEASE TYPE OR WRITE PLAINLY WITHIN BORDER - DO NOT FOLD
 1269-R 4-551

UNCLASSIFIED

DATE/TIME GROUP (GCT)

LCDR John B. TAPP, 565678/1310 USN — Attack Squadron NINETY-THREE
 24 March 1966

Mrs. John B. Tapp

DATA

Dear Margaret

On behalf of the officers and men of Attack Squadron NINETY-THREE, I wish to extend to you our sincere sympathy. John was a fine person, a professional Naval Aviator and was liked and respected by all. His loss is truly felt deeply here on the ENTERPRISE where he had many friends.

John's death occurred in the line of duty while serving his country. He had completed sixty-three combat missions in the Vietnam Combat Area. As it may be of some comfort to you to know the details of his accident, I will give you a resume of those events.

He had launched at 0300 yesterday (23 March) as leader of an armed reconnaissance mission into enemy territory. LTJG Stiles was his wingman. Though it was a dark night, he navigated directly to his assigned target where his flight successfully completed their attack on enemy installations. Anti-aircraft fire was observed in the target area but it was inaccurate and John reported no difficulty. After departing the coast and returning towards the ship, he and his wingman visually checked one another's aircraft for evidence of damage. It was determined that both aircraft were undamaged. Once overhead the ship, John was directed to initiate an instrument approach for landing aboard. This is standard operating practice on all night landings, even though the weather was good - reported to be scattered clouds at 1500 feet above the surface of the water and visibility of seven miles. I listened to the tape of his radio transmissions made during his instrument approach and could detect nothing out of the ordinary in the tone of his voice or in his standard verbal responses to queries and instructions from his controller. However, at about 8 miles out on his straight-in approach to the ship, his aircraft faded from the radar scope and he failed to respond to his controller's radio calls. Captain Holloway who was listening to the radio, as he often does on the bridge during flight operations, quickly directed a helo to that area and as well ordered a nearby Destroyer to proceed to that point. Within a very few minutes, 2 Destroyers and 2 helo's as well as ENTERPRISE were in the area of John's crash to assist as necessary. The sky began to show signs of daybreak about an hour later and an oil slick on the calm surface of the sea pointed out the area of the accident. Scattered wreckage was recovered and quickly identified as coming from John's aircraft. John was not recovered. Investigation revealed that he had not ejected and that the aircraft had hit the water with terrific force and had disintegrated upon impact. I am convinced that he died instantly and did not suffer.

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