

Stokes Nature Center  
History & Lore of Logan Canyon Podcast Series  
Plane Crash of 1953

At this location, you will see a 6 ½-foot-tall stone memorial with 40 names on it. On January 6, 1953, a military transport plane crashed at this site while transporting American Korean War soldiers from Seattle, Washington, to Fort Jackson, South Carolina.

The plane was overfilled with soldiers eager to return home after having been away from their families for so long. Due to the way the military organized its transports, all the passengers had last names that started with H, J, and K. According to the flight log, the plane ended up carrying about 400 pounds more than it was designed for. Everything was fine when the pilot radioed in at Malad City, Idaho. But the plane was not heard from again.

Air patrol and civilians began a search through the Bear River Mountains and found the remains of the plane in Pat Hollow. It had completely disintegrated on impact. There were no survivors, and little of the wreckage was even recognizable.

When the remains were analyzed, the cause of the crash was determined to be ice that had formed on the wings, interfering with the plane's lift. The fact that the plane was overloaded added to the problem. It also appeared that the plane had entered the mountains from the southeast heading northwest, indicating they might have been trying to return to Malad for an emergency landing.

Since the crash occurred in the middle of winter in an area with deep snow and low temperatures, removing all of the bodies proved extremely difficult. A base camp was set up and the site was guarded until spring when the Army removed the last of the human remains.

In 1967, Gordon B. Hinckley of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints dedicated this memorial to the victims of the crash. No one was more affected by this tragedy than the relatives of the victims. In the following years, some traveled a great distance from their homes in southern states to visit this memorial site. Even today, visitors sometimes find pieces of wreckage, including items that once belonged to the passengers of the plane. Many decide to leave these tokens on top of the memorial.

Sources:

Sweeney, Michael S. *Last Unspoiled Place: Utah's Logan Canyon*. National Geographic Society, 2008.