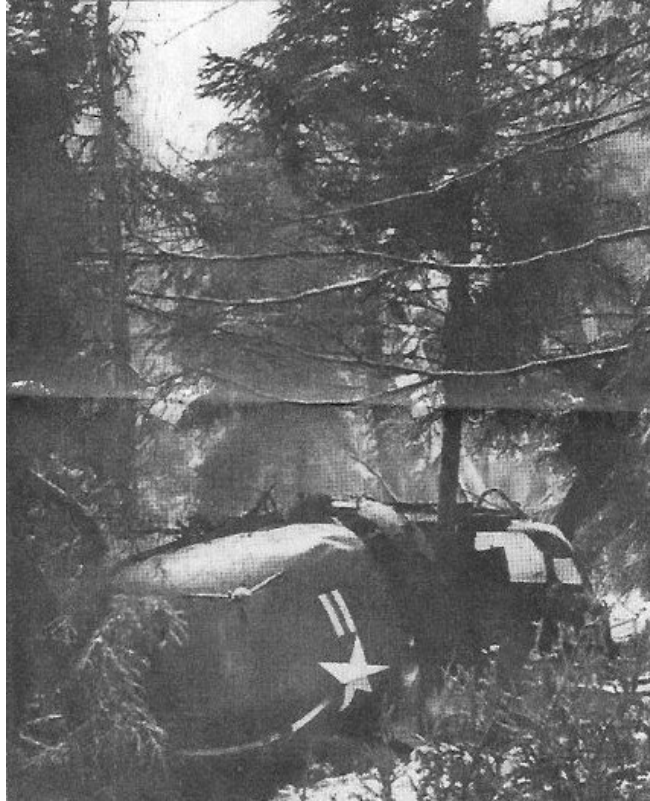


## <sup>1</sup>US HELICOPTER CRASHES NEAR SECHSELBERG

[Editor's Note: References to the co-pilot in the first article is in fact SP6 Harry I. Kee, crew chief aboard the helicopter. Weather was certainly a factor in this accident, as another aircraft experience similar problems in the same area.]



*Pilot is killed - Co-Pilot critical - Deadly Accident happened in heavy Fog and Snowstorm in the County of Backnang - Suspected Cause is Engine Failure*

*Also near Eberbach at the Neckar River forced landing in Snowstorm*

On Thursday around noon, in a heavy snowstorm and thick fog, an American Army helicopter crashed near the small village of Sechselberg, County of Backnang. One of the crewmembers, the Pilot, lost his life. His co-pilot was pulled from the totally wrecked helicopter and transported to the county's hospital with life-threatening injuries. According to Police Headquarters in Backnang, the cause of the accident has not yet been established. Engine failure is suspected.

The name of the dead pilot, a 36-year old Sergeant, was given as Harry I. Kee. The police did not know the name of the co-pilot, a 27-year old Captain. The two Americans are members of an Army unit, which is attached to the VII US Corps.

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<sup>1</sup> Stuttgarter Zeitung Nr. 21 Friday, 26th January 1968: Translation by Mrs. Ingrid Prosser (professional German translator).

**Headquarters reports:**

Late Thursday afternoon, the headquarters of the VII Corps in Stuttgart confirmed that the helicopter crashed, but the Americans could not confirm the cause or give details of the crash. They reported that an inspection team had been dispatched to the crash site.

The helicopter, a troop (personnel) carrier of the type "Sikorski", had been on its way from Niederstetten to a military airport near Stuttgart, when it crashed about 25 miles northeast of Stuttgart.

The crash site is located on a steep, heavily wooded slope next to the road to Althuetten, about 200 Meters outside the limits of Sechselberg, a village of about 400 inhabitants. The helicopter crashed into the trees on this slope. Eyewitnesses from Sechselberg rushing to the crash site later reported having seen the helicopter circling very low, with the motor sputtering, and abruptly stopping, at which time the helicopter plummeted onto the steep, wooded slope.

**Eyewitnesses report:**

Forestry employees working nearby, who heard the sound of the impact, rushed to the site, which was about 100 meters from the road. They encountered a horrible sight. The totally destroyed helicopter was lying on its side, with bent and ripped apart rotor blades. Some beech and spruce trees had been shaved off or broken. One crewmember, the 27-year old Captain still showed life signs. The pilot was dead. A short time later police and ambulances arrived. According to Headquarters VII Corps in Moehringen, the gravely injured Captain suffered serious head wounds and broken legs, however, the physicians at the hospital in Backnang said that his survival chances were good.

After the German first responders, American Military police from Kornwestheim took over and secured the accident site. In the afternoon, two heavy equipment trucks with cranes from the American Army arrived to start the difficult task of recovery and salvage.

**Pilot loses his sense of orientation:**

A plane of the American Air Force "U6a" was forced to land Wednesday afternoon on a farmer's field near Eberbach at the River Neckar. During the landing, the plane collided with a tree, which tore off one of the wings. The six passengers in the plane, the pilot and co-pilot and four soldiers were not hurt.

According to the police in Eberbach, the airplane, which is part of an Army Unit in Schweinfurt, was on its way from Baumholder in the County of Pfalz to Hanau. When the plane/pilot lost his orientation in the heavy snowstorm and radio communications failed, the pilot decided on a forced landing on SR37. However, when he encountered heavy traffic on this road, he decided to land instead of the field between the road the Neckar River. In the heavy snowfall, he missed seeing the tree, which the plane then hit. The passengers walked away unhurt but in shock. Because of the ripped off wing, the oil and gasoline tanks were damaged also.

After the landing it was discovered that the wings and Antenna were totally iced over, which was the reason for the disruption of radio contact with the ground stations. American soldiers stood watch over night at the landing site. On Thursday, the plane was dismantled and returned to Schweinfurt.

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