

Locate WWII Crash Site at Bradley International Airport, CT USA

SURABIAN Deborah and McVEY Shawn

USDA-NRCS Connecticut

Abstract:

Changing land use under urbanization creates unique challenges for soil survey and archaeological investigations. In 1941, Second Lieutenant Eugene M. Bradley crashed his Curtiss P-40 Fighter in a wooded area north of the then, Windsor Air Base. Eyewitness accounts say the spiraling downward P-40 impacted the ground with no explosion and with no visible wreckage; the engine was found 13 to 15 feet below the surface in the sandy Windsor (mixed, mesic Typic Udipsamments) soils and only the main fuselage of the fighter was recovered. Bradley International Airport, located in Windsor Locks, CT, was named after 2LT Bradley in 1947. Interest from various veteran groups to honor 2LT Bradley with a memorial marker created interest to locate the crash site. Creation of airport infrastructure over 68 years complicated the search for the original crash site. Based on eyewitness accounts and triangulation of known landmarks, a 33-m by 47-m grid was laid out across the pavement of Runway 33 for ground penetrating radar (GPR) investigation. The GPR survey concluded that the area surveyed may be a plain crash site due to the fact that the soil was disturbed and potentially large enough to coincide with similar plane crash observations.

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Information of corresponding author

Full Name: Shawn McVey

Organization: USDA-NRCS Connecticut

Mailing address: 344 Merrow Road, Suite A, Tolland CT 06084-3917

Tel: 860-871-4011

Email: shawn.mcvey@ct.usda.gov