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[People](#)  
[Places](#)  
[Area 51](#)  
[Random](#)  
[Top 100](#)  
[Catalog](#)  
[What's New](#)

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Page Titles  
Page Contents  
Book  
Title/Author  
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# Aviation Archeology

From: Xelex@aol.com  
Date: Sat, 19 Jun 1999 00:28:33 EDT  
Subject: Aviation Archeology

More wrecks found by X-Hunters

Members of the X-Hunters Aerospace Archeology Team have located several more aircraft wrecks in the deserts of the western United States.

In March, X-Hunters co-founder Peter Merlin and associate member Tom Kinzel located two crash sites near El Paso, Texas. The first was a Martin XB-51 bomber prototype. Only two were ever built, serial numbers 46-685 and 46-686. Ship 685 crashed while enroute from Edwards AFB, California to Eglin AFB, Florida. Following a stopover in El Paso on 25 March 1956, the jet crashed on takeoff due to premature rotation leading to a stall. Maj. James Rudolph and his crew chief were killed. There was some confusion at the crash site because the aircraft was marked as the "Gilbert XF-120," a paint scheme it had worn in the motion picture "Toward The Unknown."

Merlin and Kinzel also located the crash site of SR-71A (61-7970). The aircraft was lost on 17 June 1970 during aerial refueling. The Blackbird pitched up suddenly, striking the KC-135Q tanker (serial number 59-1474). Lt. Col. Buddy Brown and Maj. Mortimer Jarvis ejected safely. The damaged tanker landed safely at Beale AFB, California.

In early June, X-Hunters founding members Peter Merlin and Tony Moore, associate members Tom Tschida and Tony Accurso, and several guests located

the crash site of JF-104A (56-0749) at Edwards AFB, California. NASA research pilot Milt Thompson ejected from this aircraft after an asymmetrical flap condition developed causing an uncommanded roll.

The X-Hunters team is currently resaerching several other crash sites in the vicinity of Edwards AFB.

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