### Technical Report of U.S. Army Ground Accident

**Summary of Witness Interview**

**Requirements Control Symbol**: CSOCS-308

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Name of Witness (Last, First, M.)</th>
<th>2. Occupation/Title</th>
<th>3. Grade</th>
<th>4. Date of Birth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boyd, Don, D.</td>
<td>Driver</td>
<td>E-8</td>
<td>19780101</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5. Address (Include ZIP Code) (If military, include organization)</th>
<th>6. Telephone Number (Duty/Work)</th>
<th>7. Date of Interview (YYYYMMDD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C Co, 2-215th Aviation Fort Rucker, AL 36330</td>
<td>DSN 55 8/1236</td>
<td>20090101</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>8. Experience and Background</th>
<th>9. Location at Time of Accident</th>
<th>10. Interviewer (Name and Grade)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TIS 5 yrs</td>
<td>Behind accident vehicle</td>
<td>DAC Darlington</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**11. Promise of Confidentiality.** A promise of confidentiality can only be offered in Limited Use Investigations, which normally are not ground accidents. For exception, see AR 385-10, paragraph 3-10.

a. Was a promise of confidentiality offered to the witness? ✓ Yes ☐ No (If yes, read blk 14a to the witness and complete blk 15. If no, read blk 14b to the witness.)

b. Confidentiality was requested by the witness. ✓ Yes ☐ No (If Yes, interviewer sign and date statement below.)

**The Witness Made This Statement Under a Promise of Confidentiality.**

**Digital Signature 123456789**

**Signature of Interviewer**

**Date (YYYYMMDD)**

**12. Summary of Interview**

SSG Boyd was the low jumper in the stack and the #1 jumper for final. SSG Boyd stated that on the downwind (base) he signaled with his leg for a left turn to final. After 50 feet, he heard shouting and turned to see a jumper behind him tell another jumper to turn away. SSG Boyd stated that the jumper to his left turned right into the jumper behind him. SSG Boyd said that he saw the two jumpers collide and become entangled. After they entangled, the two jumpers began to spin in a downward plane and impacted the ground.

End of Summary.

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**Figure 4–3. Example of completed DA Form 285-W, Summary of Witness Interview**
14. GENERAL WITNESS INFORMATION BRIEFING (Interviewer must read appropriate instructions to the witness)

a. Promise of confidentiality offered.

(1) This accident investigation board has been convened under the provisions of Army Regulation 385-10 for the purpose of conducting a safety investigation.

(2) This may be just one of a number of investigations being conducted regarding this accident; collateral or legal investigations may be ongoing as well. Those investigations are entirely separate from a safety investigation and are also required to inform you of their purpose and of your legal rights.

(3) The safety investigation is being conducted for accident prevention purposes only. Within the military, pursuant to AR 385-10, it cannot be used for any other purpose, to include any future disciplinary actions against any individuals. Therefore, the interview you are being asked to provide will be used by the Army in the interest of safety and accident prevention only.

(4) Nonconfidential witness interviews may be released to the public pursuant to a Freedom of Information Act request. If you wish to protect your interview from public release outside the military, then your interview must be pursuant to a promise of confidentiality. Confidentiality means that your interview will not be released to the public or outside DoD’s safety channels.

(5) Whether your interview is confidential or not, the chain of command will review the final accident report, which may include a summary of your interview, but the chain of command may only use the interview report and the interviews for safety and accident prevention purposes.

(6) If you ever have knowledge that your witness interview was used by the Army for anything other than accident prevention purposes (for example, disciplinary action against an individual), you should consult with your local Judge Advocate Defense Counsel Office and request that the Command Judge Advocate, U.S. Army Combat Readiness Center, be notified at DSN 558-2924 or commercial (334) 255-2924.

(7) The promise of confidentiality is available to you if you desire it. Do you desire it?

b. No promise of confidentiality offered.

(1) This accident investigation board has been convened under the provisions of AR 385-10 for the purpose of conducting a safety investigation.

(2) This may be just one of a number of investigations being conducted regarding this accident; collateral or legal investigations may be ongoing as well. Those investigations are entirely separate from a safety investigation and are also required to inform you of their purpose and of your legal rights.

(3) The safety investigation is being conducted for accident prevention purposes only. Within the military, pursuant to AR 385-10, it cannot be used for any other purpose, to include any future disciplinary actions against any individuals. Therefore, the interview you are being asked to provide will be used by the Army in the interest of safety and accident prevention only.

(4) The chain of command will review the final accident report, which may include a summary of your interview, but the chain of command may only use the interview report and the interviews for safety and accident prevention purposes. The interview summary may be released to the public pursuant to a Freedom of Information Act request.

(5) If you ever have knowledge that your witness interview was used by the Army for anything other than accident prevention purposes (for example, disciplinary action against an individual), you should consult with your local Judge Advocate Defense Counsel Office and request that the Command Judge Advocate, U.S. Army Combat Readiness Center, be notified at DSN 558-2924 or commercial (334) 255-2924.

15. AVAILABILITY OF PROMISE OF CONFIDENCE FOR “LIMITED USE” REPORT OF INVESTIGATION

a. Pursuant to AR 385-10, witness interviews may only be used within the military for purposes of accident prevention, and may not be used as evidence in connection with any administrative or disciplinary proceeding. This protection alone does not prevent release of the interview outside of the military (to the public, newspapers, attorneys, etc.) under the Freedom of Information Act. If you wish to protect your interview from release outside of the military, then your interview must be pursuant to a promise of confidentiality.

b. If you do not wish a promise of confidentiality, you may decline such below. In that case, your interview will still be used in the military only for purposes of accident prevention, but it may be released outside of the military in response to a Freedom of Information Act request. Please indicate which option you desire by initialing one of the choices below.

I request a promise of confidentiality. I understand that the results of my interview will be used within the military only for the purposes of accident prevention, and will also be protected from public release outside of the military under the Freedom of Information Act.

I decline a promise of confidentiality. I understand that the results of my interview will be used within the military only for purposes of accident prevention. I also understand that the results may be publicly released outside of the military under the Freedom of Information Act.

Boyd, Don, D

Name of witness (Print Name - do not sign)

DA FORM 285-W, FEB 2009

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Figure 4–3. Example of completed DA Form 285–W, Summary of Witness Interview—continued

a. Instruction. DA Form 285–W, Summary of Witness Interview (see fig 4–3) will be completed for all on duty Class A and B accidents. As a minimum, summaries of the interviews with the primary personnel involved/injured will be included. Any individual identified in a finding having a causal or contributing role must be interviewed, if available. The form will also be used to summarize interviews and statements of commanders, supervisors, maintenance personnel, and others who are able to contribute pertinent information concerning the accident. If additional space is required, use letter-size paper for continuation sheets. Form is available at USACRC Web site: https://safety.army.mil at Accident Reporting & Investigation–Forms.

b. Procedural guidelines. The procedural guidelines instructions are as follows:

(1) All witnesses will be interviewed according to chapter 2, paragraph 2–3. The investigator will emphasize to the witness that the sole purpose of the accident investigation is for accident prevention. The witness should be further informed that the U.S. Army seeks to isolate the cause(s) of the accident so it may take appropriate action to avoid similar accidents. If the witness is a civilian, the investigator will avoid using Army terms and acronyms.

(2) The board president or recorder will brief all witnesses concerning the interview. This will be done by reading to the witness the information on page 2 of the DA Form 285–W, contained in block 15, “General Witness Information Briefing.” (See fig 4–3).

(a) The purpose is to ensure that the witness understands the intent of the interview, who will or can have access to the information, DOD restrictions on the use of the interview, and its public releasability.

(b) If a promise of confidentiality is not offered to the witness, the interviewer will read the section, “No promise of confidentiality offered.” As a general rule, ground accidents are “General Use” investigations and the promise of confidentiality cannot be offered unless they meet the criteria outlined in AR 385–10.

(c) If a promise of confidentiality is to be offered—

1. The interviewer will read the section, “Promise of confidentiality offered.”

2. The witness will complete block 16, “Availability of Promise of Confidentiality for Limited Use Report of Investigation.”

3. The witness will initial the appropriate paragraph indicating his/her choice, requesting or declining confidentiality. Note. (The exception for interviews under enhanced recall/hypnosis, which will automatically be deemed confidential and treated as such.)

Summaries of witness interviews will not be signed by the witness.

4. The interviewer will complete block 12 of the DA Form 285–W and only sign and date the form if “Yes” is checked.

(d) If the witness is willing to be interviewed or make a statement, it will be summarized in “third person” in block 13 of the DA Form 285–W. The complete verbatim account of all that was stated should not be included. A summarization is to be used, but it should not exclude any information that assists in explaining the circumstances of the accident.

a. Also see paragraph 4–5.

b. Block 15. See example of completed DA Form 285–W (see fig 4–3).

1) Block 1. Self-explanatory.

2) Block 2. Enter general occupation of the witness and duty being performed at time of the accident.

3) Block 3. Enter the grade of witness. Use codes from table 4–5.

4) Blocks 4–5. Self-explanatory. (SSN is not required.)

5) Block 6. List DSN number if applicable.

6) Block 7. Enter date(s) of interview(s) was/were made.

7) Block 8. Enter a summary of experience, expertise, and background in duty/MOS involved in the accident

8) Block 9. Enter location of witness at the time of the accident relative to the accident.

9) Block 10. Enter grade and last name of person in charge of interview. If witness is interviewed by different persons in charge on separate occasions, list the lead interviewer.

10) Block 11. Promise of confidentiality.

(a) Check the appropriate box to indicate if the witness was/was not offered a promise of confidentiality. This can only be offered for limited use investigations. See AR 385–10.

(b) Also, check the appropriate box to indicate whether or not the witness requested a promise of confidentiality.

(c) If promise of confidentiality was offered and requested/accepted, the interviewer must sign and date the confidentiality statement.

11) Block 12. Summary of interview, will be completed as follows:

(a) Multiple interviews, same witness. Preface the summary of each interview with the date and indicate if it is the first, second, third, and so forth, interview.

(b) Comprehensiveness. As a general rule, the interview summaries of persons involved/injured in the accident should be summarized in greater detail than the statements of others. This is because the personnel involved are the best source of information pertaining to the accident chronology of events. The chronology for the “history of events,” Narrative of Investigation (see para 4–4) will most often be obtained from the personnel involved and should be used as a guide in determining what elements of information to include in the interview summaries. If human error appears to be involved in the accident, the mistakes/errors and system inadequacy(ies) listed in the instructions for completing the findings and recommendations (see para 4–3) are useful for determining what should be addressed in the witness summaries.

(c) Consolidating. When several witnesses, other than person(s) involved, provide essentially the same observations, it is not necessary to prepare a separate DA Form 285–W for each witness except for statements made with a promise of confidentiality. In cases where the summarized statements of several witnesses can be consolidated, it is appropriate to leave blocks 1 through 9 blank. In block 13, list the names of the witnesses and then summarize their collective observations.

(d) Format. The proper format is a concise summary of information elements. An example is as follows: “This witness was a passenger (identify location of passenger) in the vehicle at the time of the accident. Additionally, he heard a grinding noise in the area of the right rear wheel, prior to the brake failure.” In cases where it is essential, limited direct quotes of a witness (together with the specific questions they are in response to) may be used. Again, this should be done sparingly and only when necessary. It is important that the statement be the investigator’s summarization and not an exact verbatim transcript of what the witness said. The summary should be written in the third person (“The witness said ...,” “He said ...,”) and not the first person (“I saw ...,” “I heard ...”).

12) Block 13. Enter the date of the accident.

13) Block 14. Interviewer will read block 15a or 15b to each witness, depending upon the category and/or circumstances of the witness.

14) Block 15. Those witnesses offered a promise of confidentiality, must indicate acceptance or refusal by initialing the appropriate statement (see fig 4–3).