

peared to snap off the tops of trees on the Wayland Simmes property not far from the village's four corners and just back of Nelson's own home.

It remained in the air for nearly a half mile, flying partly on one side, before it hit a string of utility wires, then struck an apple tree and took several bounds into the 50 foot deep gully, strewn fragments along the way.

As the plane hit the ground there was a loud-explosion and it burst into a raging inferno of flame. The four injured men were thrown clear of the fire.

The bodies observed in the wreckage were burned beyond recognition, one figure crouched stiffly in a sitting position.

Another charred form was found 20 feet away.

A huge crowd began to gather at the scene, even before the Ashville and Panama fire departments and the Ashville women firemen arrived. There was little the firemen could do until the flames partly subsided.

While firemen ran booster lines to Goose Creek near the Green Brothers mill motorists took the four injured men to Jamestown.

Officials Rush to Scene

Among those rushing to the scene were agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, state police, deputy sheriffs, Jamestown police headed by Chief G. Harry Nelson, Fire Chief Rudolph H. Swanson and Assistant Chief Jack Martyn, officers of the Jamestown Navy Procurement Office and members of the Civil Air Patrol. FBI men took charge pending arrival of Army men.

Although parts of the plane were spread over a wide area, including chunks of propellers and wing and fuselage fragments, the six who perished were in the main jumbled mass lying in the gully.

Of the four taken to Jamestown General Hospital one was severely burned and suffered deep

through the tree. Then it went on over the village to Carpenter's pasture on North Hill where it crashed," she said.

Mrs. Swanson said that the plane appeared to be burning even before it hit the ground. She added that people from the village immediately rushed to the scene to offer any possible assistance.

Mrs. B. J. Carpenter said:

"The plane was low over his parents home near the four corners in Blockville when the tail hit a tree on the Kenyon-Chapman property.

"The plane went on and crashed in a pasture on North Hill. It exploded and burned."

James H. Gray, 17, of the West Lake Road, a Civil Air Patrol corporal, was walking to Ashville from his Cheney's Point home, when the big plane came low overhead, he said.

The plane disappeared beyond a hill, he recalled, and seconds later he heard the boom of an explosion and a billow of smoke appeared in the sky, hanging there, he said, "like a black cloud."

A motorist, Fred Metzger of Pittsburgh, vacationing near Cheney's Point, came along, picked up young Gray and took him to the scene. The CAP ye said the burning fuselage was lying in a gully, and parts of the plane were scattered about. "I sounded like the sizzling of me frying," he added.

While he was there, Gray said, the gasoline tank blew up in a burst of orange flame.

A truck driver named Snyder of Celoron, was credited by those who visited the scene with pulling one of the trapped fliers from the burning wreckage and beating out with his hands flames threatening the crewmen.

First car at the scene was reported to be that of "Bud" Weiser, well known veteran local ball player, and his wife, Grace, who

See PLANE CRASH Page 10

Continued

took one of the fliers to the hospital.

Lieutenant Nelson was a member of a heavy bombardment crew at Casper, Wyo., according to last reports. He had nearly completed his training and was due to go overseas soon.

He entered the service Nov. 21, 1942, and took his initial training at the Frederick Army Air Field, Frederick, Okla.