

32 KILLED IN CRASH OF CHARTER PLANE

California Victims Include 28
Mexican Workers Who
Were Being Deported

FRESNO, Calif., Jan. 28 (AP)—A chartered Immigration Service plane crashed and burned in western Fresno County this morning, killing twenty-eight Mexican deportees, the crew of three and an immigration guard.

Irving F. Wixon, director of the Federal Immigration Service at San Francisco, said that the Mexicans were being flown to the deportation center at El Centro, Calif., for return to their country.

The group included Mexican nationals who entered the United States illegally, and others who stayed beyond duration of work contracts in California, he added. All were agricultural workers.

The crew was identified as Frank Atkinson, 32 years old, of Long Beach, the pilot; Mrs. Bobbie Atkinson, his wife, stewardess, 28, and Marion Ewing of Balboa, co-pilot, 33.

Long Beach airport officials said that Mr. Atkinson, formerly of Rochester, N. Y., had logged more than 1,700 hours flying time as a wartime member of the Air Transport Command. The guard was identified as Frank E. Chaffin of Berkeley.

The plane, which was chartered from Airline Transport Carriers of Burbank, was southbound from the Oakland airport, when it crashed in view of some 100 road camp workers.

Foreman Frank V. Johnson said that it "appeared to explode and a wing fell off" before it plummeted to the ground. A number of those in the plane appeared to jump or fall before the aircraft hit the earth, he added.

The wreckage was enveloped in flames when the fuel tanks ignited. Not until the fire died down were rescuers able to get near the plane. By then, there was nothing to be done but to extricate the bodies.

The scene of the crash is in the mountains about twenty miles west of Coalinga, seventy-five miles from here in the rough coastal area.

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