In April 2017 the continuing internet search for information pertaining to South Park High School students who lost their life in service located additional information regarding William Gaczewski from several websites and sources.

In searching the Internet for him substantial information was found in South Dakota, and particularly through the good will and assistance of Ms. Raven Christman a librarian in the Lemmon Library and as it happens, her great uncle Mr. Jens Hansen who also lives there.

An article was located in the Rapid City Journal\textsuperscript{1} entitled, “Historical group dedicates plaque marking WWII era crash site near Lemmon” that summarized the crash of the B-24E that took the life of South Park High School graduate William Gaczewski on October 20, 1944. Cpl. Gaczewski, a crewman, was an Engineer onboard.

An Air Force training mission took a bad turn in October 1944 when the pilots noticed one of the four engines on their B-24 Liberator bomber was failing.

Things got even worse when the crew confused which engine was the problem and throttled down the wrong ones.

The plane went into a spin, and after twice ordering his crew to bail out, 2nd Lt. Robert Meyer wrestled it to the ground south of Lemmon.

A group of veterans and historians will commemorate the crash site that killed four members of the 10-man crew with a new plaque Thursday.

\textsuperscript{1} Nick Penzenstadler Staff Reporter, Rapid City Journal Newspaper, September 22, 2010.
“We’re just doing it to mark the spot and honor the four fighters who were killed,” said Jens Hansen, a member of the Meadow Historical Society.

Hansen, who was only 9 years old at the time of the crash, remembers taking the 6-mile drive with his parents to see the wreckage.

“There was apparently some pilot confusion, but he got her pretty well set down and hit some rough country,” Hansen said. “It slid and tipped up on its nose; luckily it didn’t catch fire.”

An article in the Oct. 26 Lemmon Tribune said “another tragic bomber plane crash” occurred around 10:30 p.m. “on the Frank Hubler place, located in Whitney township, 26 miles south, five miles east, and two miles south of Lemmon.”

As the plane was going down, seven of the crew jumped out with parachutes, but three died after their chutes opened too late; another died in the plane, according to the article.

The group also obtained the official War Department document that chronicles the crash.

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2 Note: David Christman is the father of Ms. Raven Christman, Lemmon Library Director.
“The pilot and co-pilot crawled through the right front window and, with the help of a farmer, rescued the lower turret gunner, who was pinned under the top turret,” the report said. “The navigator was killed in the bomb bay. His chute was open and was found 40 feet behind the wreckage of the aircraft.”

E-mail was sent to Mr. Penzenstadler at the address listed in the article but was immediately returned. A subsequent instant message sent to the Rapid City Journal Facebook page ascertained that he no longer worked there, but offered to assist. Following explanation of intent, the RC Journal responded that they had no further information and suggested contacting the Lemmon City library.

Lemmon Tribune, October 26, 1944, Pg 1
A similar request for additional information was sent to the library and shortly after a response was received which included an article dated October 26, 1944 and “…I spoke with a gentleman that has done extensive research about the crash. He even arranged a small ceremony and plaque not long ago commemorating the event and those that died. He will stop in tomorrow with a file for me to look through which I will pass on to you.”

On April 27th, an e-mail was received from Ms. Christman “The gentleman I visited with is actually my great uncle, Jens Hansen. He said you can call him (telephone number) if you have more questions for him. I am attaching just a bit of the information he showed me-I'm not sure if you want all of it! ....” Included in the attachment were the following pictures and documents:
# War Department

## U.S. Army Air Forces

### Report of Aircraft Accident

- **Date:** 20 October 1944
- **Time:** 22:20 EST

#### Aircraft Information
- **Type and model:** B-24D
- **A.F. No.:** 42-7269
- **Station:** Casper, Wyo.

#### Personnel

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Years in Service</th>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Branch</th>
<th>Station</th>
<th>Air Force on Command</th>
<th>Use of Command</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Robert A. Meyer</td>
<td>T/S</td>
<td>2nd Lt.</td>
<td>2nd Lt.</td>
<td>A.C.</td>
<td>2 AF</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>William A. McNurs</td>
<td>S/S</td>
<td>2nd Lt.</td>
<td>2nd Lt.</td>
<td>A.C.</td>
<td>2 AF</td>
<td>H.C.</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>William J. Mikulac</td>
<td>2/Lt</td>
<td>2nd Lt.</td>
<td>2nd Lt.</td>
<td>A.C.</td>
<td>2 AF</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Alex J. Kasmar</td>
<td>2/Lt.</td>
<td>2nd Lt.</td>
<td>2nd Lt.</td>
<td>A.C.</td>
<td>2 AF</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>William S. Gomac</td>
<td>2/Lt.</td>
<td>2nd Lt.</td>
<td>2nd Lt.</td>
<td>A.C.</td>
<td>2 AF</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Bernard W. Dav</td>
<td>2/O</td>
<td>2nd Lt.</td>
<td>2nd Lt.</td>
<td>A.C.</td>
<td>2 AF</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Carmen A. Ross</td>
<td>2/Lt.</td>
<td>2nd Lt.</td>
<td>2nd Lt.</td>
<td>A.C.</td>
<td>2 AF</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Edward S. Kaiser</td>
<td>2/O</td>
<td>2nd Lt.</td>
<td>2nd Lt.</td>
<td>A.C.</td>
<td>2 AF</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Howard W. Long</td>
<td>2/O</td>
<td>2nd Lt.</td>
<td>2nd Lt.</td>
<td>A.C.</td>
<td>2 AF</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Ralph L. Kizer</td>
<td>2/O</td>
<td>2nd Lt.</td>
<td>2nd Lt.</td>
<td>A.C.</td>
<td>2 AF</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Pilot Charged with Accident

- **Name:** Robert A. Meyer
- **Rank:** T/S
- **Last Name:** Meyer
- **Assign:** 6th AF, Casper, Wyo.
- **Station:** Section T

#### Frontier Flightline (at the time of this accident)

- **Type:** (4 engines)
- **Model:** (P-3)
- **Last 10 days:**
- **Total Pilot Time:** 450:10

#### Damage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>M</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whole Aircraft</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Weather at the time of accident
- **Instrument**

#### Nature of accident
- **Forced landing at night.**

#### Cause of accident
- **Probable cockpit confusion.**

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RESTRICTED
The 1940 Census shows that he lived at 210 Amber St with his parents and two sisters. He graduated from South Park with an Engineering diploma. DIAL 1938 reflects that he had perfect attendance for the year. He is buried at Holy Cross Cemetery, Lackawanna NY.

Please note Use of geocaching.com services is subject to the terms and conditions in our disclaimer.

Geocache Description:
This is the location of the crash site of a B-24 Bomber in 1944, which was on a training mission. This site also has a historic marker with additional details.

The cache is an ammo box with pictures and small pieces of the bomber. During wet weather hike in from the gate.

Additional Waypoints (Add / Edit waypoints)

Prefix Lookup Name Coordinate
- R0 R0 FENCE (Reference Point) N 45° 32.700 W 102° 04.587
- T0 T0 GATE (Trailhead) N 45° 32.692 W 102° 03.977

1 Logged Visit

**Warning! Spoilers may be included in the descriptions or links.**
4 KILLED IN BOMBER CRASH NEAR MEADOW

Four men were killed, and one injured out of a crew of 10 men manning a four-engined bomber that crashed with flaming motors about 10 p.m., Friday night near the Carl Hubler farm in the north east Meadow vicinity. The accident occurred on a road north of the Casper, Wyo., Air Base. Killed were Wm. Gaczewski, Ralph Kyer, Lt. Milor Mikulac and Alex Kaczmarek. The co-pilot of the plane was injured. The men unhurt included Lt. Robert Meyer, pilot, Carson A. Bas, Bernard Day, radio-man, Sherwood Long and Sheldon E. Kaiser, crew members.

Trouble developed when one engine of the bomber flamed and two others stopped, sending the huge craft into a tailspin over the east-Meadow countryside. Several persons saw the falling plane, and reported a tremendous sound of backfiring motors. At the order to "hit the silk" crew members donned parachutes and jumped. The first man out died, his parachute barely having time to open as the plane dived almost to the ground. The next man made a successful landing, and the third was killed, his parachute on backward and unopened. Another burst of speed carried the plane higher again, and the two men made landings some distance. The five other members of the crew rode the plane down.

Crew members gave high praise to the pilot, Lt. Robert Meyer, for his excellent work in bringing the plane down without greater damage. The great plane struck the ground on the Ruger place, barely missing the house, and bounded and drugged to a stop near the Hubler buildings a mile and half northwest.

Neighbors gathered immediately and at once began a search for the four missing men while the pilot was taken to Meadow to report by telephone to his base. Sheriff D. J. Durick was called to the scene, and with about 30 men walked the area for hours trying to locate the crew members unaccounted for. At last two were found some distance back from the plane. Not until daylight were the remaining two located.

CONGRESSMAN FRANCIS CASE TO SPEAK HERE NOV. 3rd

Bison will have an opportunity to hear Congressman Francis Case, Custer, speak in this community on Friday afternoon, November 3rd. The hour of his arrival here is not known.

BISON LEGION, AUXILIARY TAKE ALL HONORS AT DISTRICT CONVENTION

Honors for unit activities, largest delegation present and traveling farthest distance to the conference went to the Bison Legion and Auxiliary organizations Wednesday at the District Eleven meeting held in Timber Lake, and a Bison Auxiliary member, Mrs. Brown, was elected President of the District for two years.

For the first time named award the unit will receive the Hessie Parker Cup for exceptional activities carried out during the year by the organization. Cash prizes of $2.00 and $1.00 respectively were awarded for the largest delegation and the longest distance traveled.

At the election of officers in the Auxiliary department, Mrs. Wm. Watson, Bison was elected District President for the next two years. She presided at the conference. In order to have a strong, active group, the elected president, who has left the district, Mrs. Lawrence, Dupree, is alternate.

Upon invitation of the Bison Post and Auxiliary, the District Eleven units will attend the 1945 conference. The local units extend a cordial invitation to all units in the district to attend the meeting one year.

At Timber Lake, Legion members met in the Legion Hall at 2 o'clock where they were accorded a hoity-toity reception. Lt. Col. H. R. Leffingwell, Adjutant Walter Brady, National Field Secretary J. D. Mulraney, Membership Chairman L. F. O'Neill, and Bud Ballew, Veterans Employment representative, were present.

Auxiliary members convened in the courthouse to hear talks by State President Helen Hargis and Secretary Mary Anderson. Memorial services for three departed members were conducted by the Bison unit, and initiation by faith was carried out.

Sponsored by the Bison Commercial Club and the Parent Teacher Association, the program will begin Monday with a hot dinner served to students who have paid in advance for their meals for a week. Meals are planned for the week by Mrs. W. S. Parker, State Chairman of the program.

Following a delicious banquet served in the Municipal building, the program included a special address by Mrs. W. S. Parker.
Lemmon Post #66 Dedicates Memorial

Pictured from left to right is District 11 Commander Willard Ottman, Past Post 66 Commander Jens Hansen, Harold Kvale, and Perkins County Commander Bill Erhart from Lemmon.

On Saturday, October 30, 2010, Brattvet-Green American Legion Post #66 of Lemmon, dedicated a bronze plaque at the site of a B-24 plane crash that took the lives of four crew members on a training mission from the air base in Casper, Wyoming.

The plaque was designed and given for the event by sculptor John Lopez who has also created many of the Presidential Statues in Rapid City.

Past Post #66 Commander Jens Hansen has worked for over three years trying to locate any existing relatives and/or survivors of the incident to no avail. The dedication all came together under the direction of Jens Hansen and with the cooperation of Daryl Storm, the present landowner.

Special guests at the event were Harold Kvale, a WWII Co-Pilot on B-24’s and George Bolt, from Isabel, also a crew member that was shot down and became a POW as a result.

The Rev. Web Bower presented the Invocation and Benediction during the dedication service. Members of the Brattvet-Green American Legion Post #66 Honor Guard presented the Colors; provided the Firing Squad; and played Taps to conclude the ceremony.

The event was covered by KEVN-TV from Rapid City. Approximately 50 people attended the Memorial Dedication Service.
WWII Bomber Crashes near Meadow, SD

At 10:00 PM, October 20, 1944, a four-engined B-24 Bomber crashed with a crew of 10 men on the Hubler farm, six miles northeast of Meadow, SD:

Four crew men were killed, and one injured. Those who died were Lt. Milan J. Mikulec, 23 bombardier, Cpl. Wm. S. Gaszewski, 22 engineer, Cpl. Ralph L. Kizer, 25 gunner, F-O Alexander J. Kaczmarek 19, navigator.

The injured man was co-pilot Carson A. Bass. Other survivors were Lt. Robert Meyer, pilot, Bernard Day, radio-man, Sherwood Long and Sheldon B. Kaiser, crew members.

The bomber was on a routine training flight from a Casper, Wyoming base. Trouble developed when one engine of the bomber flamed and two others stopped, sending the huge craft into a tailspin over the east Meadow countryside. Several people saw the falling plane, and reported a tremendous noise of backfiring motors. The bomber came down with a deafening roar about 300 feet west of the Hubler home.

This plaque is gratefully dedicated to those men, who gave their lives for their country.
Special thanks to Ms. Raven Christman, Director of the Lemmon City Library and Past Commander Jens Hansen, Brattvet-Green American Legion Post #66, Lemmon and their members for honoring and remembering the crewmen who lost their lives in this crash. Thanks for your assistance.

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The 1940 Census shows that Walter Gaczewski lived at 210 Amber St. with his parents and two sisters. He graduated from South Park with an Engineering diploma. DIAL 1938 reflects that he had perfect attendance for the year.

He is buried at Holy Cross Cemetery, Lackawanna NY R-R, Lot 494, Grave 1.

It was learned³ that Gaczewski had been married for one month before his death in October 1944. His wife, Anna Gaczewski, nee Kozlina, of Lackawanna NY was living with him in Wyoming at the time. Tragedy touched Anna on September 18, 1944 when her brother, PFC Peter Kozlina was killed in action in France.

Facebook review on May 12, 2017 located the Wyoming Veterans Museum page. The Museum is located in Casper, Wyoming. Message inquiry to the Museum resulted in a positive response on May 13, 2017 via written summary⁴ of the crash that killed William Gaczewski.

Special thanks to John Goss of the Wyoming Veterans Museum.

³ Buffalo Evening News, October 23, 1944
exploded. Investigation revealed that the starboard engine had thrown a rod, causing it to catch fire. The pilot either was struck by the airplane upon exit or had bailed out at so low an altitude that he did not have time to pull the ripcord.

**10-20-44. Lemmon, South Dakota.** At 2220 MWT, a Consolidated RB-24E suffering a multiple engine failure made a forced landing 25 miles southwest of Lemmon, South Dakota, killing four fliers. Three fliers were killed in unsuccessful parachute jumps. Three fliers were uninjured parachuting to safety. Four crewmembers stayed with the airplane, one being killed in the crash landing. The B-24 had taken off from Casper Army Air Field, Casper, Wyoming, on a routine night cross-country flight to Fort Peck, Montana, to Bismarck, North Dakota, and return. The B-24 took off at about 1720 MWT and successfully navigated to Fort Peck and then to Bismarck. Investigators stated, "About one hour out of Bismarck, North Dakota, the trouble started.... [The pilot stated] that one of the engines on the right side cut out, so he gave the emergency three-engine procedure, mixture auto-rich, propellers high rpm. The mixture remained at auto-lean. He thought number-one engine went out, so he feathered it. When realizing that the trouble was in the number-three engine, because they were only pulling 20 inches of manifold pressure and 2,000 rpm on it, and that the cylinder head temperature 280 degrees, he feathered it. After feathering number-three, the pilot and co-pilot stated that the number-four engine went out. All of the engine instruments were reading normal on this engine and the reason they knew it went out was from the added control pressure. Pilot gave order to bail out and the co-pilot repeated the order. They were able to hold the ship in an attitude approximating level flight for about 30 seconds. Then the ship went into a right spin. Shortly after the entry into the spin, number-two engine was seen to explode and shoot blue flames. The throttles were pulled back and the ship was brought under control. The co-pilot then cut number-two magneto. Some of the crewmembers still had not jumped and the aircraft was now at 4,300 feet, after going into the spin at 8,600 feet. The pilot again gave the order to bail out. The co-pilot tried to get out [but] he could not make it so he got back into his seat. The pilot then switched on the lights, and the co-pilot lowered the flaps [and apparently the landing gear] and the ship made a crash landing with wheels down, although neither pilot nor co-pilot indicated that they were lowered. The aircraft was landed on top of a slight ridge and skidded approximately 75 yards with full brakes on. The ship then skidded off a slight knoll and dropped approximately 10 feet, blowing the left landing gear tire. This caused the ship to skid somewhat sideways, breaking the nose wheel landing gear, letting the nose fall to the ground. The ship then skidded approximately 135 yards before coming to a full stop. The pilot and co-pilot crawled through the right front window and with the help of a farmer rescued the lower turret gunner, who was pinned under the top turret. The navigator was killed in the bomb bay. His parachute was open and was found 40 feet behind the wreckage of the aircraft." Investigators stated that they found no evidence of engine failure and speculated that the pilots became confused. Bombardier 2Lt. Milan J. Mikulec, engineer Cpl. William S. Goczewski and gunner Cpl. Ralph L. Kizer fell to their deaths in unsuccessful parachute jumps. Navigator F/O Alex J. Kalmavek was killed in the crash landing. Pilot 2Lt. Robert A. Meyer, co-pilot William A. McManus were uninjured and gunner Cpl. Carson A. Bass received light injuries in the crash landing. Radio operator Cpl. Dernard W. Day, gunner Cpl. Sheldon B. Kaiser and gunner Cpl. Sherwood W. Long parachuted to safety and were uninjured.

**10-21-44. Hillsborough Auxiliary Airfield, Florida.** At 1257, a North American P-51D suffered a catastrophic structural failure and crashed on the AAF Bombing Range one mile northeast of Hillsborough Auxiliary Airfield, Tampa, Florida, killing Capt. Russell F. Mimmack. The airplane was leading a four-ship flight that had taken off from Hillsborough Auxiliary Airfield on a dive-bombing mission. The airplane was observed to enter its fourth bombing run at 9,000 feet msl, pulling out at about 2,500 feet at an estimated speed exceeding 400 mph. The airplane was seen to enter a slow roll to the left. As the airplane became inverted, the pilot rolled the airplane back to a level position at about 1,500 feet. Moments later the port wingtip was seen to separate from the airplane, and as the airplane rolled to the left the starboard wing separated from the airplane, followed by the port wing and pieces of the tail section. The P-51D went out of control and crashed on the range, exploding into flames upon impact.

**10-22-44A. Lubbock, Texas.** At 0155, glider pilot F/O Richard J. Engles was killed when he was run over by a Waco CG-4A that was being towed to the take-off position at South Plains Army Air Field, Lubbock, Texas. CG-4A glider pilot and AAF rated airplane pilot 2Lt. Gerald L. Ovel was uninjured. The two glider pilots had just landed at the field and had been towed back to the marked position of the officer in charge of grading the landings and pilot assignments. F/O Engles' flying period had ended and he was slow in exiting the glider. The officer ordered F/O Engles to remain in the glider until it was towed to the take-off position where he could safely exit. A short time after the tug began towing the glider back to the take-off position F/O Engles shouted for the tug driver to stop and let him out. Lt. Ovel ordered him to remain on board until the glider was towed into take-off position, but F/O Engles exited the glider, which apparently was still moving. F/O Engles lost his balance and fell into the path of the glider's starboard main wheel and was run over, causing fatal injuries.