

## Stinson OY-1/2 "Sentinel"



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### **Information:**

In September 1948, the Coast Guard acquired four Stinson OY-1 Sentinels for law enforcement duties, including searching for illicit stills in cooperation with the Treasury Department's U.S. Alcohol Tax Unit, a throw-back mission harking back to the days when the Coast Guard's primary mission was to catch or discourage smugglers. To supply these OY-1s with necessary replacement parts, the Coast Guard also acquired three Stinson L-5s and these were cannibalized as needed.

The Coast Guard decommissioned three of the OY-1s in May of 1949 and acquired a single OY-2, which was given the Coast Guard number of 03937, in 1952. All of the Sentinels served at Elizabeth City, although one did serve TDY at San Diego in October 1948. Unfortunately, the OY-2 crashed while searching for illicit stills in Texas on 11 February 1958, killing the pilot, Lieutenant, Junior Grade E. A. McGee. His passenger, a Treasury agent, survived. The single remaining OY in the Coast Guard's inventory was then surveyed and retired.

The December, 1958 *U.S. Coast Guard Flight Safety Bulletin* [No. 3, p. 4] noted: "THE ACCIDENT: An OY crashed during an A&TTD Law Enforcement flight. The pilot received fatal injuries. The agent was seriously injured. The plane received strike damage. HISTORY OF THE FLIGHT: The plane departed in VFR conditions with approximately 3 hours of fuel. After working one and one-half hours with two radio-equipped cars, the plane departed to search an area where an illicit distillery had been reported. The plane was searching a heavily wooded area when it struck some tree tops and then plunged to the ground after an estimated 2 hours and 13 minutes of flight. About 25 minutes after the crash, the wreckage was seen by two people driving through the state park where the airplane came to rest. These people notified the park manager who made immediate arrangements for help. THE INVESTIGATION: Despite a very intensive investigation, the cause of the accident could not be determined. The pilot was considered a very reliable and conservative pilot. He had been an outstanding flight student. He had not flown an excessive amount in the 72 hours prior to the accident. All available evidence indicated that he had had an ample amount of rest the night before the accident. There were no physical factors involved. There was no evidence of mechanical failure or malfunction or of any maintenance deficiencies. . .The agent who was riding in the plane did not notice anything significant in the pilot's actions or in the behavior of the plane or engine prior to hitting the trees. CONCLUSIONS: The cause of this accident is undetermined. . .Due to the many shortcomings of the OY, it was decided to survey the one aircraft remaining in the inventory. Future A&TTD flights will be made in helicopters."





**Sources:**

Arthur Percy, *U.S. Coast Guard Aircraft Since 1916* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1991), pp. 232-233.

