

DAILY PROGRESS
25 JAN 1978

Weather Suspected In Crash

PEARISBURG, Va. (AP) — While authorities believe inclement weather and icing caused the crash of a single-engine plane that killed an Ohio couple, they say they won't know the definite cause until their investigation is completed.

Killed Sunday in an apparent emergency landing attempt on a Giles County mountainside were Ernest E. Murphy, 52, and his wife, Doris Jean Murphy, 50, of Alliance, Ohio.

Mrs. Murphy was dead at the scene of the 1:30 p. m. crash near Sugar Run Mountain off Virginia 622 about three miles southwest of this southwest Virginia community. Her husband died about two hours later, said Civil Air Patrol spokeswoman Paula Gould.

The Murphys were en route home from Savannah, Ga., when their single-engine Cessna apparently was forced down by the weather, officials said. The plane's wings were reported heavily iced up.

There was a heavy overcast with clouds hanging lower than mountaintops in the area, authorities said.

Murphy apparently tried to land the plane uphill in a pasture with a 30-degree slope, authorities said. They said the plane's tail touched first and the craft spun around and smashed into the hillside when the wheels hit. Both wings were nearly ripped off.