

Moscow, USSR
18 September 1960

Editor
New York Times
New York, New York

Dear Sirs:

I was given the opportunity to read the article in the August 27th issue of the New York Times in which my father while being interviewed stated that I did not think that I had been shot down.

Apparently my father misunderstood the answers I gave to questions put to me during the trial.

I would like to clear this misunderstanding by saying that even though I did not see what it was that caused the explosion I feel sure that it was not the aircraft itself which exploded. All of my engine instruments were normal up to the time of the explosion which I both felt and heard. I also saw an orange flash or glow when I looked out.

I cannot be sure but I think the explosion was behind and maybe to the right of the aircraft.

I felt no impact of anything against the airplane itself, therefore I think the shock wave from the explosion caused the damage.

I can only guess what happened after that. I am of the opinion that the tail of the aircraft came off first causing the nose to drop sharply resulting in the failure of both wings. The cockpit and what was left of the aircraft tumbled and finally settled into an inverted spin causing "G" forces which made it impossible for me to use the ejection seat. I finally got out of the aircraft at fourteen thousand feet or below. I give this altitude because my parachute opened automatically and it was set to open at fourteen thousand feet. It opened immediately upon my getting free of the aircraft.

I was at maximum altitude, as stated in the trial, at the time of the explosion. This altitude was 68,000 feet.

I feel sure that my father misunderstood what was said during the trial and if so then maybe there are others who also misunderstood. I hope this letter will clear up any misunderstanding on this question.

My father did not misunderstand me when he stated that when this was all over that I was coming home. I do intend to come home and I pray that I will not have to stay in prison for ten years.

Sorry to have bothered you but I felt that an explanation was needed to clear up the question of what actually happened.

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Sincerely yours,

Francis G. Powers

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Vol 2 -
APPROVED FOR RELEASE
DATE 12 SEP 1985