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# Eyewitness Reports

## Many Eyewitnesses Saw Flight 93

Following is an excerpt from a 2003 version of Paul Thompson's *Complete 9-11 Timeline* describing accounts of eyewitnesses on the ground who saw and heard the last minutes of [Flight 93](#). Our [updated list](#) supplies some missing references of accounts found in Thompson's compilation.

**(Before 10:06 A.M.)**

*Numerous eyewitnesses see and hear Flight 93 just before its crash:*

1) Terry Butler, at Stoystown: he sees the plane come out of the clouds, low to the ground. "It was moving like you wouldn't believe. Next thing I knew it makes a heck of a sharp, right-hand turn." It banks to the right and appears to be trying to climb to clear one of the ridges, but it continues to turn to the right and then veers behind a ridge. About a second later it crashes. [ [St. Petersburg Times, 9/12/01](#) ]

2) Ernie Stuhl, the mayor of Shanksville: "I know of two people -- I will not mention names -- that heard a missile. They both live very close, within a couple of hundred yards... This one fellow's served in Vietnam and he says he's heard them, and he heard one that day." He adds that based on what he has learned, F-16's were "very, very close." [ [Philadelphia Daily News, 11/15/01](#) ]

*Accounts of the plane making strange noises:*

3) Laura Temyer of Hooversville: "I didn't see the plane but I heard the plane's engine. Then I heard a loud thump that echoed off the hills and then I heard the plane's engine. I heard two more loud thumps and didn't hear the plane's engine anymore after that" (she insists that people she knows in state law enforcement have privately told her the plane was shot down, and that decompression sucked objects from the aircraft, explaining why there was a wide debris field). [ [Philadelphia Daily News, 11/15/01](#) ]

4) Charles Sturtz, a half mile from the crash site: The plane is heading southeast and has its engines running. No smoke can be seen. "It was really roaring, you know. Like it was trying to go someplace, I guess." [ [WPXI Channel 11, 9/13/01](#) ]

5) Michael Merringer, two miles from the crash site: "I heard the engine gun two different times and then I heard a loud bang..." [ [AP, 9/12/01](#) ]

6) Tim Lensbouer, 300 yards away: "I heard it for 10 or 15 seconds and it sounded like it was going full bore." [ [Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, 9/12/01](#) ]

*Accounts of the plane flying upside down:*

7) Rob Kimmel, several miles from the crash site: He sees it fly overhead, banking hard to the right. It is 200 feet or less off the ground as it crests a hill to the southeast. "I saw the top of the plane, not the bottom." [The book *Among the Heroes*, 8/02, p. 210-211]

8) Eric Peterson of Lambertsville: He sees a plane flying overhead unusually low. The plane seemed to be turning end-over-end as it dropped out of sight behind a tree line. [ [Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, 9/12/01](#) ]

9) Bob Blair of Stoystown: He sees the plane spiraling and flying upside down before crashing. Its not much higher than the treetops. [ [Daily American, 9/12/01](#) ]

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*Accounts of a sudden plunge and more strange sounds:*

10) An unnamed witness says he hears two loud bangs before watching the plane take a downward turn of nearly 90 degrees. [ [Cleveland Newschannel 5, 9/11/01](#) ]

11) Another unnamed witness sees the plane overhead. It makes a high-pitched, screeching sound. The plane then makes a sharp, 90-degree downward turn and crashes. [ [Cleveland Newschannel 5, 9/11/01](#) ]

12) Tom Fritz, about a quarter-mile from the crash site: he hears a sound that "wasn't quite right" and looks up in the sky. "It dropped all of a sudden, like a stone," going "so fast that you couldn't even make out what color it was." [ [St. Petersburg Times, 9/12/01](#) ]

13) Terry Butler, a few miles north of Lambertville: "It dropped out of the clouds." The plane rose slightly, trying to gain altitude, then "it just went flip to the right and then straight down." [ [Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, 9/12/01](#) ]

14) Lee Purbaugh, 300 yards away: "There was an incredibly loud rumbling sound and there it was, right there, right above my head – maybe 50 feet up... I saw it rock from side to side then, suddenly, it dipped and dived, nose first, with a huge explosion, into the ground. I knew immediately that no one could possibly have survived." [ [Independent, 8/13/02](#) ]

*Upside down and a sudden plunge:*

15) Linda Shepley: She hears a loud bang and sees the plane bank to the side. [ [ABC News, 9/11/01](#) ] She sees the plane wobbling right and left, at a low altitude of roughly 2,500 feet, when suddenly the right wing dips straight down, and the plane plunges into the earth. She says had an unobstructed view of Flight 93's final two minutes. [ [Philadelphia Daily News, 11/15/01](#) ]

16) Kelly Leverknight in Stony Creek Township of Shanksville: "There was no smoke, it just went straight down. I saw the belly of the plane." It sounds like it is flying low, and its heading east. [ [Daily American, 9/12/01](#), [St. Petersburg Times, 9/12/01](#) ]

17) Tim Thornsberg, working in a nearby strip mine: "It came in low over the trees and started wobbling. Then it just rolled over and was flying upside down for a few seconds ... and then it kind of stalled and did a nose dive over the trees." [ [WPXI Channel 11, 9/13/01](#) ]

1

Another compilation of eyewitness accounts is archived at [flight93crash.com](http://flight93crash.com).<sup>2</sup>

## References

1. [Center for Cooperative Research](#),
2. [Flight 93 Eyewitness Accounts, www.flight93crash.com](http://www.flight93crash.com),

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