

# Five Killed When Plane For Clues of Miss N

Searching  
Crashes

## Struck Electricity Cables at Alberton Ferry

### R.A.A.F. and Police Officers Burnt to Death

Five men were killed when an R.A.A.F. Seagull Amphibian crashed near the Alberton Ferry early this afternoon.

The plane, an R.A.A.F. seagull amphibian, was engaged by the Brisbane police this morning to search the waters, shores and islands of Moreton Bay for clues of Miss Marjorie Norval, the missing typist.

It was travelling up the Logan River when it struck the electric light cables that carry current to the South Coast.

The plane crashed in flames and the five occupants were burnt to death.

Commissioned this morning to assist the Queensland police in their search for clues of Miss Norval, the amphibian took off from the Archerfield aerodrome shortly before noon and after combing hundreds of small islands at the southern end of the Bay it made for the Logan River and was travelling slowly up that River towards Beenleigh.

It was flying extremely low to make the closest observation of the mangrove lined banks of the river.

The plane crashed suddenly into the high tension main transmission line which crosses the river at the Alberton ferry.

The impact jerked one of the floats from the seagull and to the explosion of short circuiting wires the plane toppled drunkenly and crashed about 50 yards away on the river bank. It burst immediately into flame.

The entire accident was seen by the Alberton ferryman (Mr. T. Rachow). He rushed to the crashed plane but it was burning so fiercely that he was helpless to assist the trapped victims.

He ran to the nearest telephone and raised the alarm.

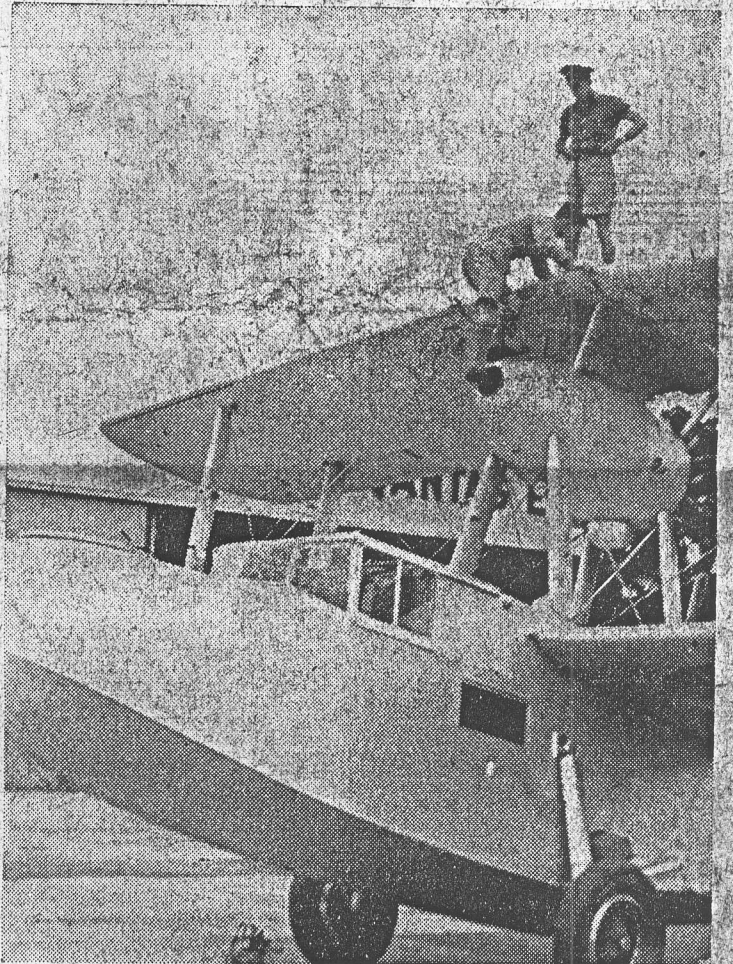
Until the current was turned off the water in the river was charged from the end of one of the broken high tension wires and restricted the efforts of the first rescuers to throw water at the flames.

The poles carrying the current from Brisbane for the electrification of the South Coast townships are about 60 ft. high.

The ambulance, together Dr. K. R. McGregor, left Beenleigh for the scene of the crash about 12.45.



Flying Officer Wyber, Detective Sergeant T. J. Lloyd, Constable G. Young, of the Water Police, and Detective W. R. Carter (from left to right) surveying the route proposed to be taken by the amphibian before it left Archerfield. Flying Officer Wyber, and Constable Young were aboard the plane when it crashed.



The amphibian just before it left Archerfield on its ill-fated flight.

28.11.38



# PLANE IN FLAMES; 4 DEAD TYPIST SEARCH DISASTER

OLD PAPER 11-38

## Amphibian Crashes At Alberton Ferry BRISBANE CONSTABLE AND AIRMEN KILLED

FOUR lives were lost in the search for the missing Brisbane typist, Miss Marjorie Norval, when a Royal Australian Air Force Seagull amphibian crashed at Alberton Ferry, near Beenleigh, yesterday.

The victims—three Royal Australian Air Force officers and a Water Police constable—were:—

Flying Officer MAX J. WIBBER, 22 single, of Newcastle.

Aircraftsman ERIC A. EVERETT, 24, single, Canterbury, Sydney.

Aircraftsman ALBERT ERNEST MILNER, 37, married, of Melbourne.

Water Police Constable GEORGE ROBERT YOUNG, 43, married, of Wiston, Brisbane.

The machine struck high tension cables across the Albert River, swerved, crashed through mangroves on the riverbank, and plunged into a canefield.

It burst into flames immediately, as the petrol tanks smashed, and it was impossible to get the occupants clear. But for the fire they might have survived, because of the soft ground on which the machine crashed.

AFTER the crash as she hit came up from the bank. We raced the ground everything was quiet for a second, and then there was an explosion and flames shot straight up, sending black smoke high in the air," said one witness of the tragedy.

"They were flying terribly low, and often you could see them only through the trees," said another. "Every one seemed quite happy when the machine passed over our home, and I waved to them," said Miss Mary Hamel, whose father's property is about a mile from the scene.

Some one in the machine waved back to me, and a few minutes later I heard a bang, and almost immediately fire howled up from the bank. We raced over, but all we saw was the blazing fire as the flames leaped up. It was terrible."

It was the first flight in Queensland in which Aircraftsman Granger, who is the photographer of the R.A.A.F. party, had not taken part.

"The first time I've missed!" he exclaimed, as he reached Alberton yesterday afternoon.

Aircraftsman T. J. Callen, another member of the crew, also did not take part in the flight.

Although it was not a Constatl Young's first flight, he was not a fanatic about the trip. However, moment before climbing into the cockpit he remarked, "It should be these Air Force boys know how to handle their planes."

The amphibian was engaged upon a search of bay foreshores and rivers, where the body of the missing typist might have been placed.

Leaving Archerfield aerodrome shortly after noon yesterday, the machine headed directly to Redland Bay, fled a few miles south to the mouth of the Albert River, and then followed the course of the stream inland.

Traveling low above the water, it had covered less than 10 miles along the river when it fouled the high tension wires, carried away about 50ft. of the half-inch copper cable, severed to the left, and crashed through the mangroves which line the bank before plunging deeply into a cane field. It burst into flames immediately.

A number of residents of the district rushed to the wreck, but although the occupants of the plane could be seen no one was able to approach close enough to drag them free, as the flames quickly mounted 30ft. into the air.

**In a few minutes the whole of the plane was enveloped by fire.**

A bucket brigade, led by Pastor C. Llanert, of the nearby Lutheran parish, and Mr. Fred Rachow, son of the Alberton ferryman, was formed, but its efforts were futile until practically the whole of the fabric had been consumed. Portions of the machine were still burning two hours after the disaster.

The high tension wires into which the machine flew supply current to Beenleigh and adjoining South Coast centres.

The cables stretch between two steel towers, about 100ft. high, on each side of the river, and would be difficult to see from a fast-moving plane.

Lacking knowledge of their presence the pilot of the amphibian apparently made no effort to avoid them.

There was a brilliant flash as the machine flew into the wires, and continued on with a long section of cable attached to its wings while a sheet of blue flame leaped up as the trailing end of the broken cable touched the water.

## Wings Torn Off

One of the wing floats of the plane was torn off, and fell into the river. The plane appeared to be under control for another 100 yards, and then veered through the mangroves, snapping off the gunks like a giant scythe, and burying itself in the bank.

The machine came to rest within a few yards of the water. Trees had torn the wings from the fuselage, and while the body of the machine shuddered in a normal position the wings were badly twisted.

As the amphibian was of metal construction it was suggested that the crew might have been electrocuted when the high tension wires were fouled. Dr.

Keith McGregor, of Beenleigh, who was on the scene shortly after the crash, said, however, that the appearance of the victims suggested they were alive before the machine crashed.

One of the airmen was leaning forward with an arm protruding, as if to soften the shock of the contact with the ground.

## Tragic Task

Bodies of the Air Force officers were identified by their colleagues

—Leading Aircraftsman G. Grainger, of Parramatta, New South Wales, and Aircraftsman T. J. Callen, of Newcastle.

Identification was not easy, for one of the bodies was burned almost beyond recognition, but by names upon collars, the colour of a few unburned strands of hair, and a fragment of watch strap it was possible to complete the task. One officer—probably the pilot—had his parachute strapped to his back, and the folds broke into fragments as police lifted him carefully from the remains of the machine.

Except for the twisted steel frame the heat reduced the machine and its contents to fragments.



AIRCRAFTSMAN E. EYEBETT, who was killed.



★ The fire-swept wreckage of the R.A.A.F. amphibian which crashed near Beenleigh yesterday, killing the four occupants. In the background the path hacked through the trees has the plane as it headed to

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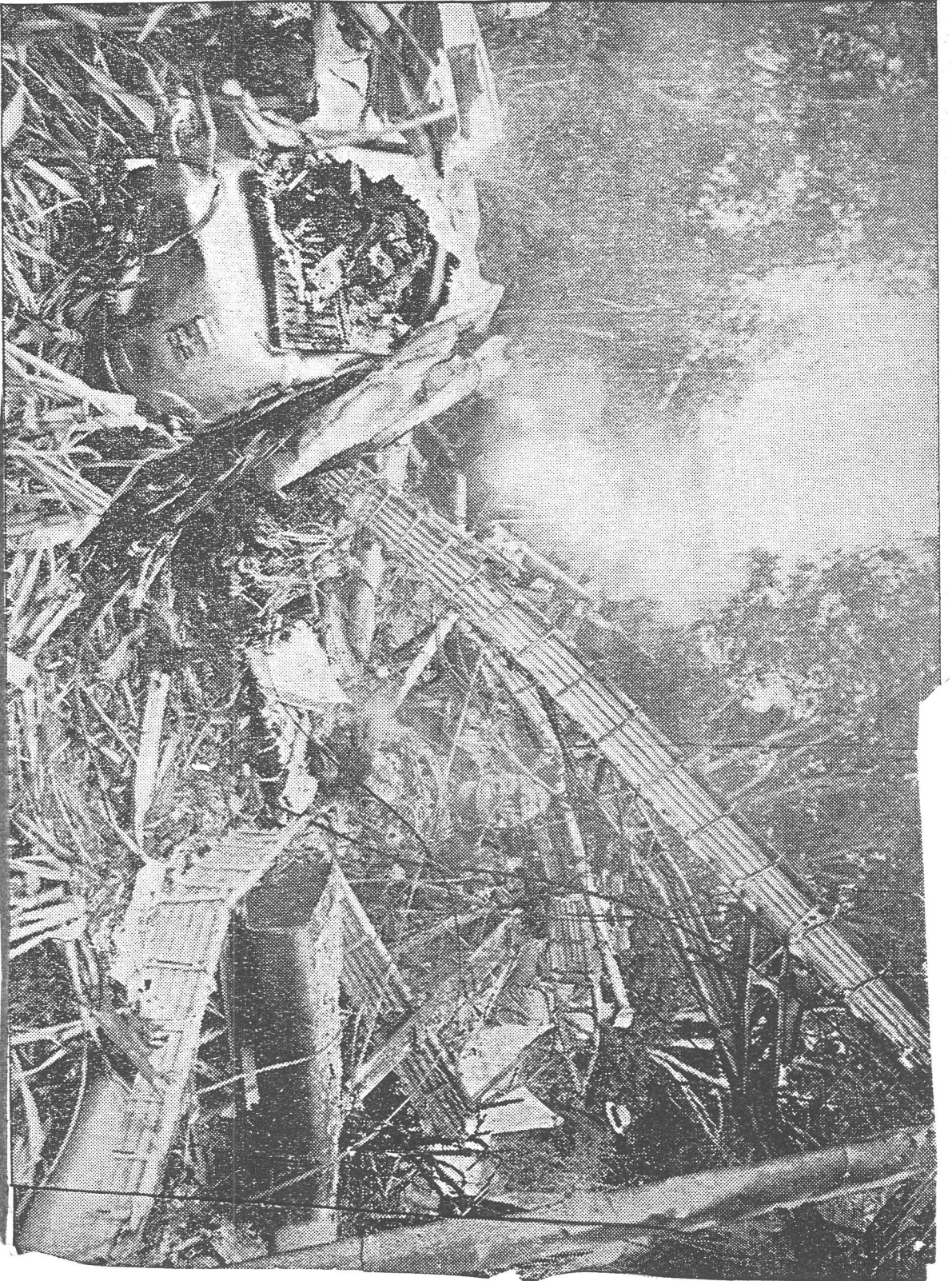
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