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SPLIT-SECOND MOVE SAVED 18 IN PLANE

A SPLIT-SECOND decision by the pilot of a R.A.A.F. Dakota twin-engined plane saved the lives of 18 men when the aircraft made a crash landing in a swampy South Coast paddock at 12.30 p.m. yesterday.

The plane missed a fence by a few feet as it glided with both motors dead on to a property owned by Mr. R. Quirk, at Duranbah, about 10 miles south of Tweed Heads.

Each engine cowling dug a furrow across the paddock for 150 yards, and the propeller blades were badly buckled.

Although the plane bounced over deep draining ditches a crate of eggs on board was unbroken. None of the 13 passengers and crew of five was injured.

One member of the crew said: "I have been in four crashes and this is the best yet."

The tension in the plane as the pilot decided to make a "belly" landing was described by one of the passengers.

"One motor started to give trouble at Kyogle, and we kept to the coast," he said. "The possibility of landing on the beach was ruled out because of cross winds."

7000-Ft. Drop

"We were in sight of the Coolangatta strip when the second motor went dead. The pilot dropped suddenly about 7000 feet in a few seconds.

"A paddock below looked smooth so the pilot lowered the wheels to land. As the helpless machine dropped lower ruts became visible and the wheels were hastily lifted again. We came in on her "belly" and we felt only one bump, when we hit a ditch."

An eye-witness, Mr. Roy Brown, a Duranbah farmer, said he heard a terrific noise and saw the plane quickly losing height. One engine was spitting and throwing out smoke.

The plane may have to be dismantled because of the difficulties and cost of preparing a strip for a take-off. It is on a low lying, sodden paddock, surrounded by hills.

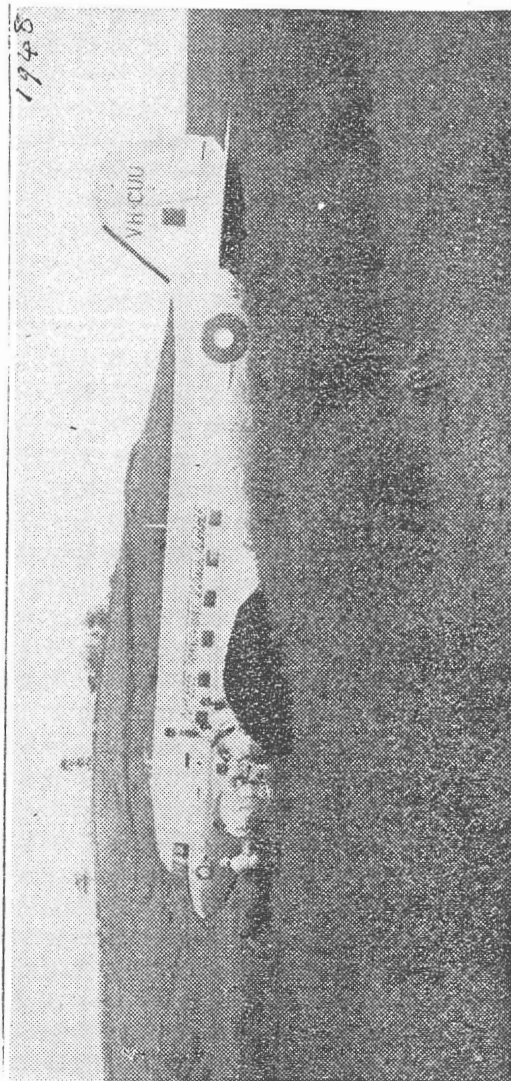
An official said that an access road may have to be built to allow a crane to be driven to the craft. It would have to negotiate steep hills.

Guard At Plane

An R.A.A.F. guard was posted on the machine, and the crew are quartered at an adjacent farm house.

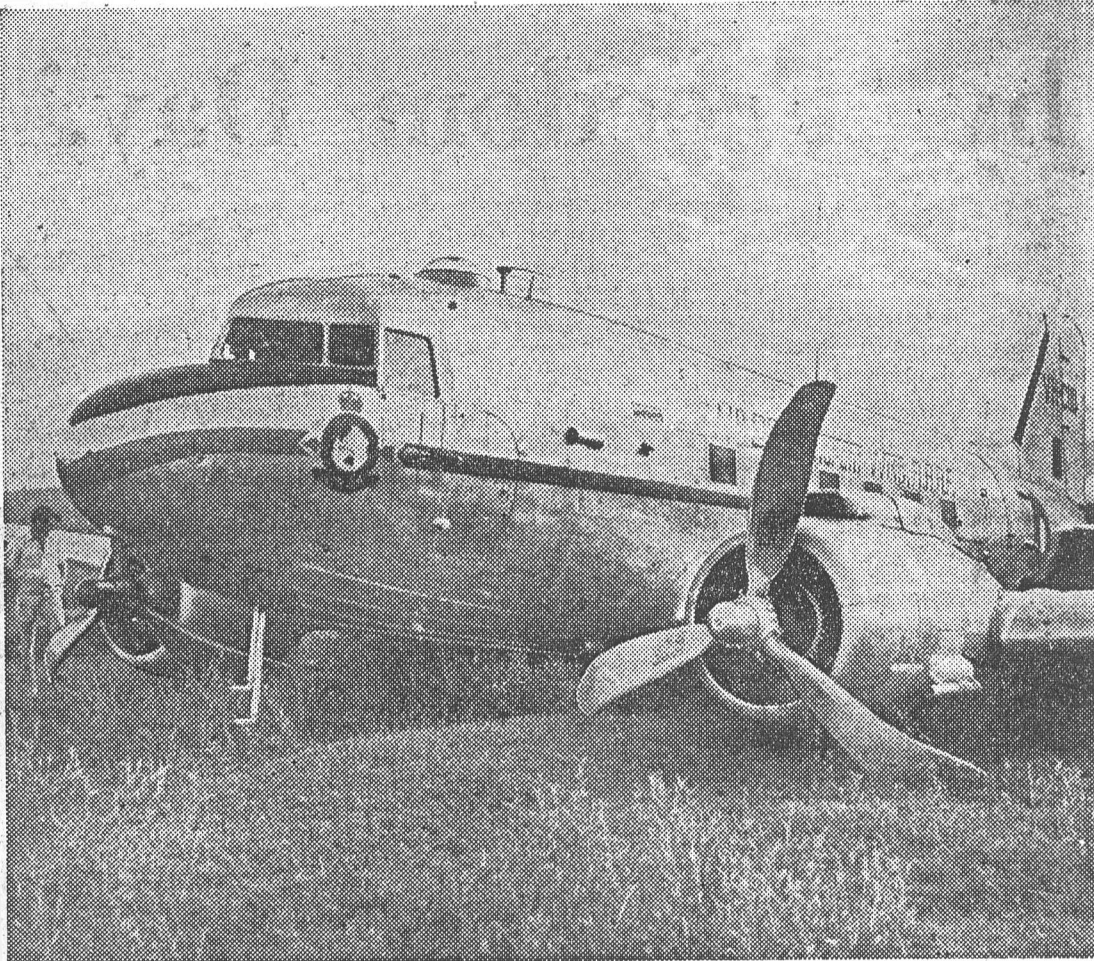
Pilot of the aircraft was Flight-Lieutenant "Sturdy" Jordan, of Kalgoorlie. Other crew members were Flight-Lieutenant Cairns,

3.4



Crash Landing This picture of the R.A.A.F. Dakota transport which was forced to make a crash landing at Duranbah, near Tweed Heads, gives an excellent idea of the difficulties surmounted by the pilot in bringing the aircraft down safely. The swampy nature of the ground is indicated by the growth of small bushes and the difficulties of a successful take-off can be judged by the small hills visible in the background.

AND NONE WAS HURT



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