

# TAKE-OFF WAS TOO HOT



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# AWAY AT LAST

**THE** Antarctic ice-breaker and supply ship *Thala Dan* left Appleton Dock at 6 p.m. yesterday for Mawson — 32 hours late.

Lashed to its main deck, and overhanging the fo'c'sle by six inches, was the RAAF Dakota aircraft which caused the delay.

Wind gusts, which made the wings unmanageable, stopped the loading operation on Saturday morning. Later, further hold-ups came when adjustments to the rigging were ordered.

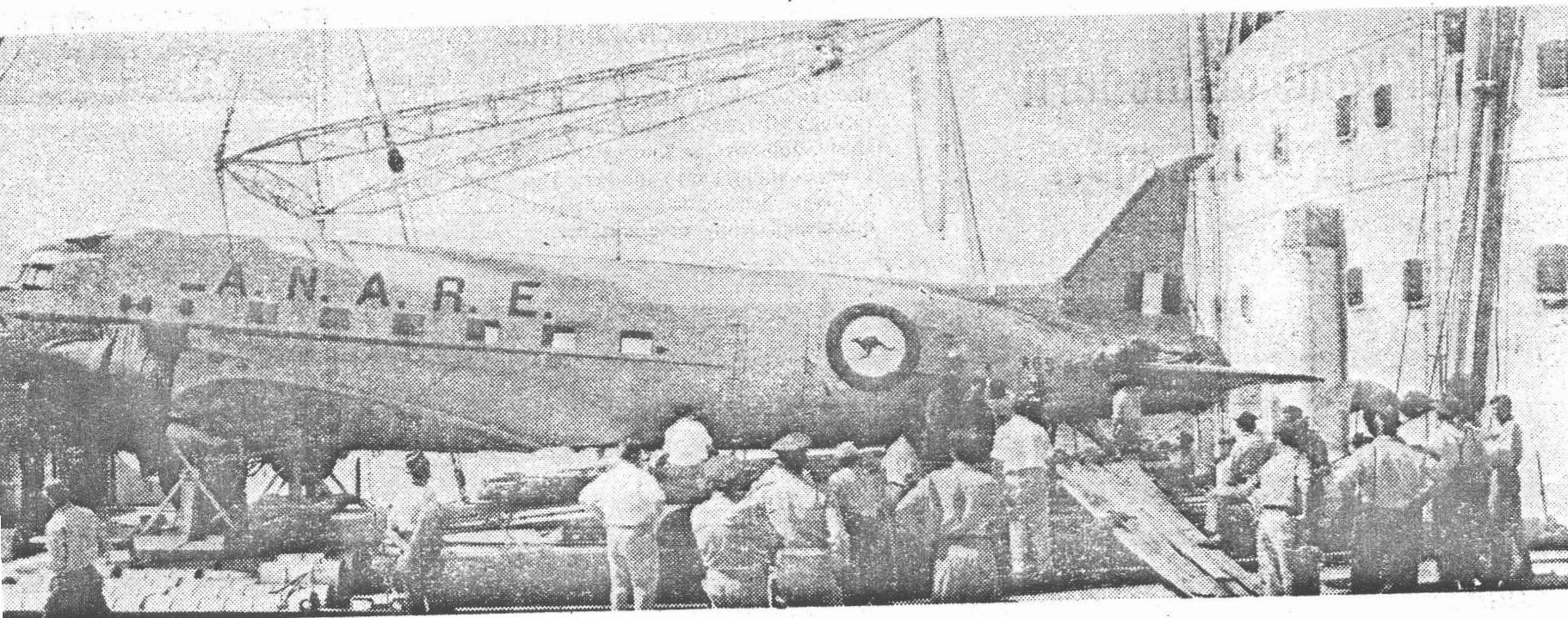
But the loading was completed in little more than two hours yesterday morning.

A barricade of 12in. thick oregon beams was built on the sides of the fo'c'sle to stop the wood-encased wings from sliding off the deck.

The *Thala Dan's* master, Captain Hans Christian Petersen, said the wharf gear was not used for loading the plane.

"We'll have to take the plane off with the ship's winches when we get to Mawson, so we regarded the loading operation as a practice run," he said.

"We didn't mind losing a little time here, just so long as we were learning, and making sure we had everything we needed to do the job properly."



11-1-60

HER NOSE nudged the top of the deck position being loaded yesterday by special gear to the ship's winches. Loading delayed the departure of the *Thala Dan* for Mawson in the Antarctic.

# PLANES WRECKED IN HURRICANE AT MAWSON BASE

## One Disappears

**C**ANBERRA, Tuesday. — Two aircraft were destroyed in one of the worst blizzards ever experienced at the Australian Antarctic research station at Mawson on Friday.

A Beaver plane was wrecked by the hurricane-force winds and a Dakota disappeared and has not yet been found. No one was seriously injured in the storm.

News of the serious loss has only just been received from the officer in charge (Mr. Hendrik Geysen) in a radio message sent over makeshift aerials.

Mr. Geysen reported gusts of wind up to 116 miles per hour, with the hurricane blowing for hours at 80 miles per hour over the station and the ice plateau behind it.

During the attempted rescue operations, men were lifted bodily into the air and thrown yards away. They slid helplessly over the ice until rescued.

### Held Each Other

Only the prompt action of men in holding on to each other prevented them being blown away with wrecked parts of the Beaver aircraft they were trying to save.

Nothing further could be done without jeopardising the lives of the men.

The Dakota earlier in the year weathered winds of 110 miles per hour.

The most thorough methods of tie-down were devised and were still operating this week when the blizzard struck.

The front tie-down cable of the Dakota broke inside the ice where it was secured. The 15-ton cable sheared at the junction to the undercarriage, and both seven-ton wing cables failed.

### Disintegrated

The Beaver was not large enough to break its cable, and the men had to watch helplessly as the plane disintegrated.

The wings pulled out from the wing roots and the rear fuselage fractured.

With its back broken

### Huts Bombarded

At Mawson camp, lumps of ice bombarded the huts, the report said.

Forty-four gallon drums of fuel left their stack and careered down to the rocks at the edge of the harbor.

The blizzard was accompanied by a very strong drift and wet snow.

Sleet transformed the rocks at the station into an ice rink so slippery that the men needed crampons to move safely from hut to hut.

Dog teams will set out as soon as the wind drops to search for the Dakota, which, during the year, has often given support to isolated dog teams penetrating the continent.

## Serious Loss to Research

By KEITH MATHER,  
"The Age" Science  
Correspondent.

Loss of the Dakota at Mawson is the most serious setback to Australian research in Antarctica during eight years of operations.

The twin-engined Dakota was fitted out at a cost of more than £100,000 and sent down at the beginning of this year.

Mawson station has suf-

which had been tied down on the ice a few miles inland were lost in 1959.

Now a third Beaver, as well as the Dakota, has been destroyed.

### Speed of Gusts

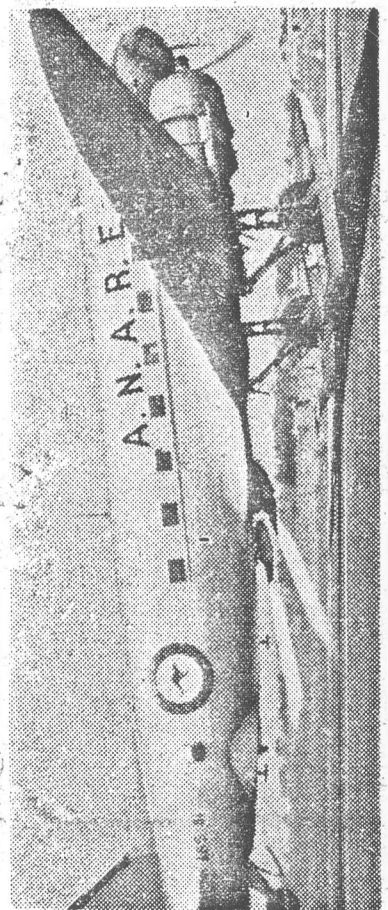
It is difficult to understand why these aircraft losses are occurring in high winds in view of the fact that other nations using aircraft down south also have them exposed outdoors and subject to equally violent storms.

However, the experiences at Mawson emphasise the need for more information on the maximum speed of gusts during blizzards.

Ordinary anemometers in use at Mawson either choke with snow under extreme conditions, or are too sluggish to record brief, powerful gusts.

However, meteorologists stationed at Mawson have, on several occasions, estimated the wind at more than 130 miles an hour.

14.12.60: AGE.



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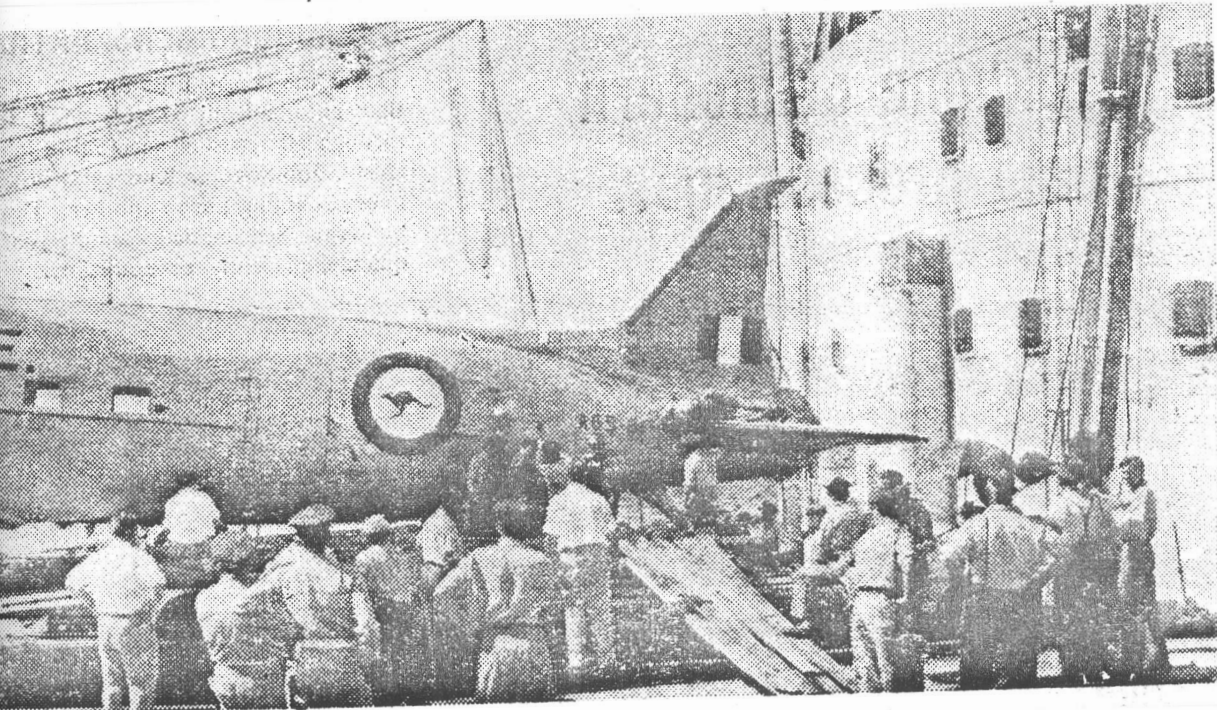
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A RAAF DAKOTA (right) made a fiery take-off at Laverton yesterday. Purple flames spurted from its jet boosters and set fire to the dry grass beside the runway. Firemen (picture above) were quickly on the scene to beat out the blaze. The Dakota, which is fitted with skis, will go to Mawson with the RAAF Antarctic team next month. The boosters, called Jato bottles, are carried under the fuselage to boost the plane in an emergency or in a restricted take-off area. Each bottle gives an added 1000lb. thrust,

