

# PLANES COLLIDE AT SEA.

## Man Rescued; Two Missing.

### FRUITLESS SEARCH.

When two R.A.A.F. training planes collided in the air and crashed into the sea off Terrigal yesterday, one of the three occupants was rescued by a small steamer. The others are missing and considered dead.

The missing airmen are: Pilot-Officer Reginald George Norris, 23, single, of Central Avenue, Eastwood (N.S.W.); and Pilot-Officer Thomas Kenneth Wright, 22, single, of Latimer Road, Bellevue Hill (N.S.W.). The rescued airman is Leading-Aircraftman Alexander MacIntyre Macpherson, 31, of Swan Bay, via Woodburn, Richmond River (N.S.W.). He was not hurt.

The aircraft were single-engined two-seaters and part of a ferry flight of four machines which left Laverton (Vic.) for a northern R.A.A.F. training school on Wednesday. They stayed overnight at Richmond Air Force Station and resumed their flight at 2 p.m. yesterday.

Three of the aircraft had crews of two. The other carried a pilot only—Norris.

The two planes collided when the formation was two miles east of Skillion Point, near Terrigal, early yesterday afternoon.

Dr. William Sheehan, of Redfern, saw the crash from a fishing boat two miles from the coast. He said that three of the planes were flying in close formation. They were making sharp turns when, without warning, two of them collided.

One plane plunged into the sea, said Dr. Sheehan, and a man dropped from the other. His parachute was closed. Within 50 feet of the sea, the parachute opened and he floated into the sea.

Two coastal vessels lowered boats to rescue him. He was clinging to a part of one of the planes, nearly exhausted, when he was picked up.

"I watched the second plane zooming through the sky in a mass of smoke," Dr. Sheehan said. "It travelled several miles and then crashed into the sea with a terrific explosion. Water was thrown more than 50 feet into the air."

### SHIP'S CAPTAIN'S STORY.

The captain of a ship which was near the scene of the accident reported on arrival at port last night that he saw the planes collide in the air. He immediately ordered the boats to be lowered, and Macpherson was picked up.

The captain said he cruised round for an hour, but found no sign of wreckage, except a few small articles floating on the water.

### SEA AND AIR SEARCH.

As soon as the R.A.A.F. received news of the crash, two seaplanes, two Lockheed Hudsons, and speed-boats were sent out to search.

The two planes of the formation not involved in the collision also participated in the search. Later, they resumed their flight northwards.

When the rescue steamer arrived at Newcastle last night, Macpherson was taken by Air Force tender to Rathmines base.

Pilot-officer Norris started training last April. He was appointed a Pilot-officer in August, and in October was posted to a training school for flying duties. He was a clerk before he joined the service.

Pilot-officer T. K. Wright was an electrical engineer in civil life. He began his flying training last February. He was granted a commission as pilot-officer in June, and was posted to a training school for flying duties.

## PRESUMING DEATH OF R.A.A.F. PILOT

As a result of a collision between two R.A.A.F. planes over the sea off Terrigal, in January, application was made to Mr. Justice Nicholas in the Probate Court yesterday for permission to swear to the death of Pilot Officer Reginald George Norris, 23.

The application was made to the Court by Mr. Norman Norris, of Central Avenue, Eastwood, the pilot's father.

The Court was informed that after the collision a plane, which Norris was piloting, crashed into the sea. An exhaustive search for the machine or survivors was unsuccessful.

Mr. Justice Nicholas granted the application, and adjourned the matter pending inquiries whether deceased left a will.

*SYDNEY MORNING HERALD*

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