

Here's Eyewitness Account Of Seattle Crash Told By President Of Air Firm

(Editor's Note: Following is the eyewitness story of Amos E. Heacock, president of Air Transport Associates, Inc., whose un-scheduled flight to Chicago ended abruptly in a death-dealing crash shortly after take-off here last night. His wife, Dorothy, was stewardess.)

By AMOS E. HEACOCK
President, Air Transport Associates, Inc.

SEATTLE, July 20 (AP) — When we got to the end of the runway, I listened to both engines check out without a sputter. But soon after we got into the air one motor began sputtering and the pilot evidently thought it best to continue. A few seconds later he pulled back on the throttle, apparently intending to land.

Then he perceived almost immediately that he could not land and pulled throttle again, continuing to climb with a sputtering engine.

I called to all passengers to tighten their safety belts. There was no panic on the plane.

Apparently the plane wasn't high enough to avoid striking the power lines. I saw a flash on one side of the plane which I believe was caused by the breaking of a high-tension wire. Then I saw another flash on the other side.

At that time I knew we were going to crash. The propellers were apparently damaged, as we were losing altitude. There was nothing I could do but brace myself.

The crash occurred with very good deceleration, as there was no damaging jar.

I called to the passengers to proceed to the rear of the plane, knowing that the flames would come from the front. The tail of the plane was broken off, making an easy egress for the passengers. I watched all passengers off the plane.

My wife, who was acting as a stewardess, was in the rear of the plane standing near where the tail broke off. I saw her lying with her head down between two seats, but as she was struggling I knew she was not seriously hurt. I picked her up and threw her bodily out of the plane.

Then I passed back through the plane toward the front and checked all seats for passengers. Then I went through the pilots' compartment, which was torn off the craft. I found two pilots struggling and a third pilot apparently dazed or unconscious.

All three were entangled in safety

belts and wreckage. One man, James M. Adams, the co-pilot, was pleading with me to get him out. I pulled the wreckage off him and picked him up and threw him clear of the flames.

Then I pulled the pilot, Merle Edgerton, who was either dazed or unconscious and threw him clear of the wreckage. Then I picked up Tony Jessing, who was in the navigator's seat and pitched him out of the wreckage. Jessing pleaded with me to be easy with him as he was injured, but the flames were already closing in on us and I had no other choice but to throw him over a fence.

As I tossed the pilots clear of the flames and wreckage, I saw spectators drag or carry them to safety.

I called to the bystanders to secure ambulances. Then I was concerned about whether my wife had been pulled clear after I threw her out.

I circled the burning plane and saw a fireman pointing to what he said was a man buried in the wreckage of a house which was demolished by the crash. I ran in after the man and the fireman helped me pull him to safety. I remember hav-



ing to climb over a davenport to get to the victim.

The house was demolished and the man was covered with wreckage. Then I returned to the rear of the plane to determine if my wife was safe. Someone told me he had

seen a woman answering her description board an ambulance without help.

After determining there was no more I could do, I proceeded to my office with Wilbur Fitch, one of my employees, who had driven to the scene.

Spud Festival Set October 21

MERRILL, July 20—The 13th annual Klamath Basin Potato Festival will be held October 21 and 22. Merrill Lions set the date at their dinner meeting Monday evening.

Various other aspects of the big event were discussed and it was announced that Klamath Basin Potato Growers would be in charge of all potato exhibits as they have in years past. Dr. F. E. Trotman, W. H. Homes and R. L. Dragoon comprise the central committee, and other committees working under them will be named in the near future.

Places were set for 12, and President Alonzo Hodges was in charge.



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