

FRIDAY, JULY 29, 1927

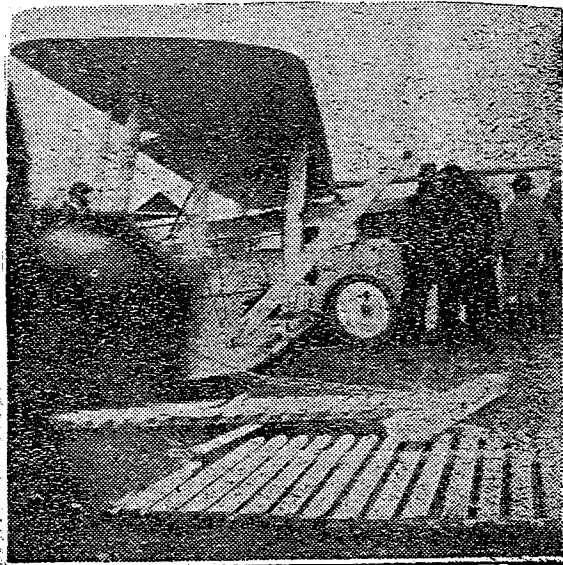


AERIAL SURVEY FLIGHT DELAYED. — Group-Captain Williams, chief of the Air Staff (centre), who is leading an aerial survey of Australian landing grounds. When taking off from Armidale racecourse, N.S.W., his plane crashed, and was wrecked. He will continue in another machine.

A8 DE HAVILLAND DH50A

There were two of these aircraft and the Wills collection only mentions A8-1

A8-1 Crash at Armidale NSW. Group Captain Williams, chief of the Air Staff, leading an aerial survey of Australian landing grounds, crashed while taking off. No-one was injured.



AFTER THE SMASH. — Group-Captain R. H. Williams's wrecked survey plane on the racecourse at Armidale, N.S.W., where it came to grief against two goal posts.

SATURDAY, JULY 30, 1927

AIR FORCE CRASH.

Machine Strikes Post.

Crew Uninjured.

Sydney, July 27.

The aeroplane in which air staff Group Captain Williams, accompanied by Sergeant Owen and Corporal Eudean is making an inspection of routes and landing stages throughout Australia, was completely wrecked when the propeller struck a hockey goal-post at Armidale this afternoon. The members of the crew of the machine were not injured. The machine landed on the Armidale racecourse at half-past two o'clock and the accident occurred when they were taking off again on their journey to Brisbane.

The machine was the big DH50, in which Williams made his 10,000 mile Pacific flight last year and which had been converted subsequently into a land plane. Williams taxied the machine to the far end of the course to get plenty of "take-off" and evidently did not see the small post. A piece was taken out of the propeller and the plane continued its progress, crashing through the rail and wire track fence. Continuing across the course proper, the machine ran through the paling fence, smashing the propeller into pieces, hopelessly wrecking the under-carriage, breaking the right wing and fracturing the left wing. One wheel was flattened. The machine came to rest against a dividing fence with the engine apparently undamaged.

The aviators hurriedly leapt from the plane when it stopped. The accident was witnessed by dozens of golfers and hockey players who were preparing to participate in matches. One golf player who was in the track of the machine saw it coming but expecting to see it rise, he did not move. He nearly left it till too late.

Captain Williams stated most emphatically that when the propeller struck the post he was flying, but many eye-witnesses are equally emphatic that the machine had not left the ground. They assert that even if the post had not been there, there was not sufficient "take-off" to allow the machine to clear the fence and buildings. Two panels of the track fence were smashed and four panels of the paling fence were carried away by the nose of the machine. The mechanics are dismantling the machine.

Captain Williams stated that until he learned the extent of the damage he was unable to say whether he will continue the flight or return to Melbourne. He is keenly disappointed at the bad luck that has dogged his footsteps since setting out on the long flight, which was expected to yield valuable information.

The Mayor of Armidale went to the course and expressed his regret to Captain Williams, who stated that he has received nothing but kindness from citizens. Captain Williams shortly after landing stated that he considered the Armidale racecourse an excellent landing ground.

BEHIND!

Plane Hit Goalpost

AIR CHIEF CRASHES

Through Two Fences

GROUP-CAPTAIN Williams, Chief of the Air Staff, when taking off from the racecourse at Armidale, N.S.W., yesterday, crashed into two goal posts, shattered the plane's propeller, and in the forced landing, smashed the under-carriage.

Before it stopped, the big machine tore through a wire fence and a high paling fence. No one was injured.

Three Royal Air Force machines left Melbourne on Thursday to survey aerial routes and aerodrome sites around Australia. The accident will add to the serious delay already experienced.

Leaving Richmond at 9.5 a.m. yesterday Group-Captain Williams came down at Armidale about 150 miles away, to re-fuel, and when taking off from the racecourse the machine fouled two goal-posts.

The board expects that Group-Captain Williams will make a complete examination of the machine, and then wire for any necessary spare parts.

The two planes piloted by Squadron-Leader Hepburn, and Flight-Lieut. Murphy, which came to grief at Adelaide last Thursday evening, arrived at Cootamundra, N.S.W., yesterday. They will go to Sydney today.



Capt. Williams

7-27 WIA PAPER