

# PLANE STRIKES MOUNTAIN IN THICK FOG

## BROTHER'S VAIN WAIT TO WELCOME HIM AT ALDERGROVE

Flying-Officer Archibald McMath, of Ballinteer, Coleraine, was instantly killed when his aeroplane crashed into the side of Divis Mountain on Saturday during a dense fog. It is calculated that an increase of fifteen feet in altitude would have enabled the machine to clear the mountain in safety.

Mr McMath, who was only 23 years of age, was on his way from Catfoss, near Hull, to Aldergrove, intending to spend the weekend with his parents in Coleraine. He had been home on leave only three weeks ago. A pathetic feature of the tragedy was that his younger brother, Ernest, was waiting at the aerodrome to drive him home, when news of the tragedy was received.

The plane was completely wrecked.

### ENGINEERS RUSH TO SCENE

Engineers from the Post Office Radio Station at Ballygomartin, realising that the plane was flying very low, rushed out of the building believing a collision with the wireless masts to be unavoidable. The top of the masts were

invisible owing to the mist.

First on the scene of the disaster were Mr G. Edwards and Mr C. Treadwell, from the station, who later helped to release the pilot from the wreckage.

McMath was a former pupil of Coleraine Academical Institution. He

joined the R.A.F. more than three years ago. he had recently returned from Iraq. For two years he had been stationed in Bagdad. This was the fortieth R.A.F. crash this year, bringing the death roll to 62.

Flying Officer McMath, who was an experienced pilot, had intended spending a few hours at his parents home near Coleraine, and his younger brother Ernest was awaiting him at Aldergrove Aerodrome to drive him home, when news of the accident was imparted to him. Three weeks ago he was home on leave.

The spot where the plane struck the mountain side is almost a mile from the Post Office Radio Station and about one hundred yards from the tortuous winding path that leads to the sum-

mit of the 1,600 feet high mountain. From the point where the machine struck the earth is cut a trench several feet deep and six or eight yards in length before it overturned and came to rest practically on the summit of the mountain. At the first point of impact with the ground there was a piece of protruding rock, which smashed the nose of the plane and tore away the undercarriage. A few yards lower down the plane skimmed a five feet barbed wire fence. An attaché case which the pilot had with him in the plane was found 50 feet away from the wrecked plane, while one of the broken propeller blades was thrown more than one hundred yards.

So thick were the clouds of fog flying over the moun-

Monday 14th June, 1937

tain that the rescue workers at first believed that the plane had caught fire. First intimation of the disaster was conveyed to the police by Mr George Edwards of the Radio Station who, with Mr C. Treadwell, Mr. S. Twomey, two mechanics employed by an English firm installing new plant, and Mr W. McClenaghan, an engineer at Belfast Head Post Office and a school fellow of the dead officer, were on duty at the radio station. Mr Edwards, accompanied by Mr Treadwell, when the plane crashed, set out to locate the plane and pilot.

### ENGINE RIPPED OFF

They saw the machine embedded in the face of the hill, the undercarriage having been torn away and

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