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AEROPLANE CRASH

Machine Totally Destroyed

PILOT'S LUCKY ESCAPE AT ARCHERFIELD

Only the fact that pilot John Barry wbb not knocked unconscious when hie plane crashed from a height of 300 feet at

Archerfield on Sunday afternoon eavod his life. The maohine burst into flames on impact and In 15 minutes was totally destroyed, and although severely burned Barry was able to extricate himself from tho flaming machine. Tho aeroplane was a Moth, tho property of the Aero Club, and waa valued at about £300. Tho first Intimation that anything waa wrong with Barry's machine was conveyed to observers on the ground by flames which shot into the air from where the plane crashed, In the paddock next to Franklin's farmhouse beyond the- fence marking the western boundary of the aerodrome. First on. the scene were three aeroplanes which took off from the aerodrome and landed near the burning machine. In these machines were Charlie Mathleson, Wyn Pike and Cec. Brett. They each carried small fire extinguishers, equipment of their own machines, which wore hopelessly inadequate to deal .with such a terrific blaze. Barry, the pilot, was not stunned sufficiently to make him unconscious, and though severely burned about the face, neck and arms, as well as suffering bad facial lacerations and shock, he managed to release hlmslf from the safety belt, which was holding him in, and escape from the- inferno, which threatened to destroy him. TAKEN TO HOSPITAL Dick Hilllor was the first 'to arrive In a car, in which he drove the Injured pilot to the casualty room in the Aero Club hangar, whore first aid was rendered by Andy Lauchland with the new crash kit that has just been Issued to every main airport In the Commonwealth. Later, the Injured man was taken by the ambulance to the Mater Misercordiae Private Hospital, where he is now reported to be progressing satisfactorily. Nobody could 'have shown more fortitude and courage under such circumstances than did John Barry. He never lost consciousness throughout, and when he left In the ambulance for the hospital he still had a cheery word for those who were doing their best to help him. Meanwhile further cars had arrived on tho sceno containing among otherB Lester Brain and his brother Lionel, Ron Adair, Andy Lauchlan (who soon left to attend to the casualty) and Sam Harris. In spite of tho fact that those men had also brought hand fire extinguishers from the Qantas hangar the maohine was burning so fiercely that any efforts to save it were of no avail, and in less than 20 minutes from the time the machine struck the ground all that was left of it was a twisted mass of burnt metal framework and the damaged engine. CAUSE UNKNOWN. Nothing is known as to the cause of the accident, which occurred at 4.45 p.m. All that onlookers who saw it can say is that tho machine went into a loft hand spin and it hit the ground still spinning. The pilot also stated that the machine got into a spin, from which, in spite of every endeavour, he was unable to recover it. At a later date, tho Air Accidents Inquiry Committee will meet to determine the cause of the crash. JOYRIDERS UNPERTURBED. ' The crowd of joyriders and spectators, prompted by their innate curiosity, soon found their way across the landing field to the scene of the burning wreckage, and luckily for them, the petrol tank did not explode, but burnt Itself out. .Strange though it may seem, tho accident In no wls0 halted the flying activities: rather did tho pilots catering for joyriders do Increased business In flying them over the site of the accident. It showed u different understanding of things than had the public or a couple of years ago, when such an occurrence would have brought all flying to a sudden stop. John Barry, of Juliette Street, Thompson Estate, who Is 26 years of age, Is manager at His Majesty's Hotel In Queen Street, and learned to fly about 18 months ago with one of Queensland's best Instructors. After completing about 55 hours solo, he Joined tho Aero Club, and on January 29 lost he did his first solo lu an

Aero Club machine. Up to the time of yesterday's accident he had flown 35 hours solo in the club's machines, making a total of 90 hours in all. At the last examination held for "E" licenses, he was successful in passing in all subjects required of him, and only needed another ten hours solo (making 100 hours in all) to gain the coveted "ticket." The machine, which was totally destroyed, was a Mark 1 Gipsy "Moth," with a metal frame and built by the famous De Havilland firm. Its identification letters were VH — UMZ, and it was flown up from Melbourne some two years ago from the club by C. W. A. Scott, who was then an instructor with the club, and who subsequently became world-famous as a holder of the England-Australia record. This crash should be heeded by the Department of Civil Aviation, unless an adequate fire-fighting equipment — portable, easily handled, and with sufficient volume of content to quickly subdue a blazing machine — is made available to every main airport in the Commonwealth, such crashes as this will without doubt result in serious loss of life and considerable damage to property.