



## Plane Hits New York River

# 80 SURVIVE AIR CRASH

## Craft Comes Down Short Of Runway

NEW YORK (AP)—A glistering new jet-powered American Airlines plane with 73 persons aboard plunged into the chilly, ice-covered waters of the East River with a shattering crash late last night. Sixty-five apparently perished, despite feverish rescue efforts by harbor craft.

The plane's pilot, using instruments because of the murky weather conditions, was leveling his way toward a runway at La Guardia Airport on a nonstop flight from Chicago.

But for some undetermined reason, the big four-engine turboprop craft snapped into the water and burst apart about half a mile from the shore end of the runway.

Some of the passengers and crew were flung from or floated out of the wreckage before it sank to the river bottom 30 to 40 feet below.

### TUGBOAT TO SCENE

A tugboat chugging along a few hundred feet away cut loose two hoses it was towing here from Connecticut and raced to the crash site. Crewmen leaped into the water or used boat hooks to pull out the eight persons known to have survived. One was an 8-year-old boy.

A member of the tug's crew said the eight survivors were something never to be forgotten.

"They seemed to be bodies all around, and there were continual screams for help," he said.

At 11:40 p.m. through the night and into a drizzling rain, many a huge array of boats searched the river for bodies. By midnight only 19 had been recovered, leaving 46 still missing. The eight survivors were in hospitals.

The mother of the rescued boy had been pulled from the water alive but died afterward. The boy said his mother swam and held his head above water before he was rescued.

Swirling river currents, plus rain and wind up to 40 m.p.h., hampered the search for other bodies, and gave rise to fears that some of them might be swept miles out into Long Island Sound.

The site of the crash was marked by a few floating pieces of the \$1,700,000 Lockheed Electra airliner—a type used into service only a few weeks ago.

Others also were some heartbreaking reminders of the tragedy—such as a baby's glove, a woman's shoe, a package of letters, a knapsack and a woman's dress, in the water.

It was an irony of fate that the tug which happened to be near the crash, New York harbor tug, ordinarily scurrying busily up and down the river, are now tied up to a strike of crewmen.

The tug which raced the rescue, however, was not affected by the strike because it is based in Connecticut.

The new airliners were designed to combine jet power with the advantages of the propeller. The engines operate on the turbine principle.

The liner was casing toward La Guardia through light rain and fog in 80-degree weather, with the ceiling about 300 to 400 feet.

Before Mrs. Kernach had reached her husband, the hospital had called the Kernach home. It was then that Steven, 14, and Jackie, 9, learned their father was all right.

Kernach flew to Chicago early yesterday on business. He tried to get an earlier plane to New York but was unsuccessful.

### Evening Prayer

Almighty Father, the source of our life and existence, guard us, we pray Thee, from sin. Let us be conscious of the damage sin causes. Cleanse our hearts and wash them in the redeeming blood of Christ, who poured out His very life on Golgotha for us. In His name Amen.

### Our Weather

Cloudy and warmer with rain ending tonight. Tomorrow, partial clearing and colder.

High yesterday 34  
High expected today 45  
High expected tomorrow 45  
Low this morning 33  
Low expected tonight 35  
Sunrise, 7:21 a.m.; sunset 5:36 p.m.

Weather Data on Page 2-A

## Mecklenburg Legislators Take Seats

**Special To The News**  
RALEIGH—Mecklenburg County's freshman-studied legislative team joined the rest of the General Assembly today in opening the 1959 session.

And odds are strong that the body will be in Raleigh for one of the longest and busiest sessions in history.

Reps. John Kennedy and Irwin Belk were sworn in at noon and took part in their first legislative session. They were seated in the House next to Reps. Ernest Hicks and Frank Stopp.

In the Senate, J. Spencer Bell, who figures to be a key figure in the 1959 legislative picture, was also sworn in.

**OFFICERS NAMED**  
The Assembly officially elected officers today, but the results were known in Democratic caucuses last night.

Rep. Addison Hewlett of New Hanover defeated Rep. Carl Venter of Onslow in the race for the House speakership. Hewlett was strongly supported by Mecklenburg's Stopp, Hewlett, 47, a Wilmington lawyer, received 63 votes to 51 for Venter, 53, a Jacksonville lawyer. Reps. Hicks, Belk and Kennedy supported Venter, considered the choice of Gov. Luther H. Hodges.

Sen. Robert Morgan of Shelby defeated Sen. C. V. Henkel of Fred in the battle for president pro tem of the Senate. In the close race, Morgan took 26 votes to 21. All four candidates had confidently predicted victory in their races.

After congratulating Hewlett, Venter moved that the vote be made anonymous for Hewlett and the House agreed with shouts.

Hewlett stood to the speaker's stand and told his colleagues "our responsibility to North Carolina is to see MECKLENBURG on page 2-A

## Reds Refuse To Let U. S. Truck Pass

HELMSTEDT, Germany (AP)—The Soviet Army stood pat today on its refusal to grant passage to a U. S. Army truck convoy held up for two days at West Germany's frontier. At the same time it was learned the Russians had searched a British truck on the same Berlin highway.

A U. S. Army officer met with a Soviet Army officer at the checkpoint for 10 minutes but apparently nothing was settled.

A Soviet Army spokesman charged that the convoy's refusal to bow to Red Army inspection controls at the West German frontier was "a deliberate and prepared maneuver."

Commenting on a rapid fire series of U. S. protests and demands that the four-truck convoy with its five soldiers guard be allowed to proceed immediately, the Red Army spokesman at East Berlin headquarters said:

"It is now up to the Americans to put this affair in order."

The Soviets are insisting that the convoy either allow the frontier of the cargo trucks to be searched or return to West Berlin.

The United States is retorting that the Russians have no right to search the truck interiors under four-power agreements.

The Americans refused to allow Soviet border guards to search the convoy when it rolled up Monday from Berlin at the Soviet checkpoint in Marienburg, just over the line from the West German border point. The trucks carried jeeps.

The west-bound British truck, with a lone driver, was held up two days ago. Both incidents occurred on the autobahn, the 110-mile road linking isolated West Berlin with West Germany.

The British said their truck was stopped at the Marienburg checkpoint as it was en route from West Berlin to West Germany.

The Russians said they wanted to check the interior of the truck, which was open at the back. The driver resisted the move.

While he was arguing with a Russian officer, a Helmsdon soldier climbed into the back of the truck and looked around, the British Army said.

He evidently satisfied himself that there was nothing inside and the Russians then allowed the truck to proceed. The driver wrote to Helmsdon in West Germany and reported to his superiors. A protest followed.

He said the Soviet officer with an interpreter and the U. S. military police captain talked at the Helmsdon checkpoint, the four-truck convoy remaining parked at Marienburg within sight of the free zone.

U. S. military authorities considered the convoy stoppage the gravest incident since Moscow began its drive last November to oust the Western powers from West Berlin.



Robert Sullivan Is Carried Ashore By New York Policemen

## Boy, 8, Lives As Parents, Sisters Die

NEW YORK (AP)—Little Robert Sullivan was sitting in the seat of the big airliner next to his mommy. Nearby were his father and two sisters.

They had been on a happy excursion to visit relatives in Chicago, as they often did, and were almost back home again.

Then came the nightmare. From a hospital bed later, Robert, 8, told about it in halting phrases as he emerged from the shock of a terrible series of events.

"I was sitting in the seat next to Mommy," he said.

"I don't know what happened but all of a sudden I began to shiver and we went under the seat."

"Then I was on something in the water."

"Mommy was holding me."

Then in the water we couldn't stay up.

"I tried to hold my breath. I was cold. My arms felt frozen."

Robert could speak no further. But somehow he knew of the tragedy that had befallen him. His murmurs to attendants made it all too plain that he knew his parents and sisters were dead.

Robert and his mother were rescued from the icy waters and rushed to the hospital. His mother was alive at the time, but died in the hospital.

His father, Joseph, and sisters, Patricia, 13, and Joan, 5, were listed along those missing as searchers continued to scour the waters of the East River for bodies.

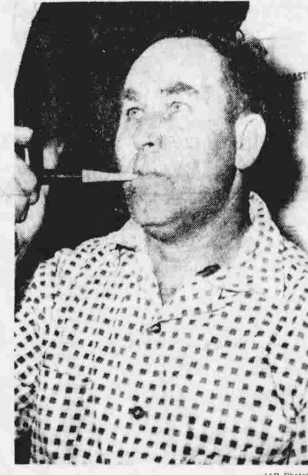
Deckhands on a tugboat steaming along the river nearby at the time of the crash reported seeing a man, holding a little blonde girl, swept under the surface of the water as the plane was sinking.

They were believed to be Robert and his mother, who were rescued from the icy waters and rushed to the hospital. His mother was alive at the time, but died in the hospital.

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Skipper Phelps Relaxes After Rescue Operation

### Helped In Rescue

## Story Of Crash Told By Bargeman

NEW YORK (AP)—A tugboat skipper gave a graphic eyewitness account of the American Airlines' crash today near his vessel in the East River, and of frantic efforts to rescue passengers.

The skipper, Everett Phelps, 48, said he would never be able to forget some of the awful sights and sounds. Phelps told this story:

"We were heading down the East River towing two empty barges from Seabrook, Conn. We heard a terrific crash. I was at the helm."

"The noise seemed to come from about 300 feet away. We turned on a searchlight and saw a plane cracking up in all directions."

"We immediately cut loose the barges, and I and some of the crew members jumped into the water. It was a shallow place, and we waded through mud."

"I pulled three persons out. There seemed to be bodies all around, and there were continual screams for help."

"We got eight persons aboard, using boat hooks on most of them. One of the people was under four feet of water, and the only way we saw the body was from a reflection on a belt buckle."

Phelps said one of the survivors picked up was a little boy, later identified as Robert Sullivan, 8, of Hempstead, Long Island. The boy was swimming in the frigid waters.

"He was smothered with cold and unable to talk," the tugboat captain said.

"I only there had been more



VICTIM — Beulah Zachary, producer of the Kukla, Fran and Ollie TV program, was listed as passenger aboard plane.

## Bulletin Told Wife Of Crash

NEW YORK (AP)—A news bulletin flashed across the television screen in a home in Brooklyn.

For Mrs. Estelle Kernach, mother of two, it was the first word that a plane carrying her husband home from Chicago had crashed into the East River.

The 35-year-old woman is a graduate of a telephone school. It was too early for American Airlines to confirm that her husband was aboard and that he was a survivor.

Max Sosnkin, Mrs. Kernach's father, who lives with her, said with the worried woman to La Guardia Airport. There he learned that some survivors had been taken to Flushing Hospital.

Father and daughter raced to the emergency ward at the hospital, where their hopes were confirmed. Seymour Kernach was among the survivors.

"He didn't know where he was," Mrs. Kernach said.

A while later he was able to report he owed his life to leaving his regular seat just before the crash.

Kernach had gone to the lounge in the rear of the plane. After the crash, he said, he helped two stewardesses and a little boy out of the plane. Next he recalled swimming toward a tug in the East River.

Before Mrs. Kernach had reached her husband, the hospital had called the Kernach home. It was then that Steven, 14, and Jackie, 9, learned their father was all right.

Kernach flew to Chicago early yesterday on business. He tried to get an earlier plane to New York but was unsuccessful.

### Recent Crash

## Tolls Heavy

NEW YORK (AP)—The death toll in the East River plane crash last night reached high tolls in crashes in years past.

Aviation's highest death toll— which involved a military plane—occurred June 18, 1953, when 129 U. S. servicemen perished in an Air Force C-124 globeaster near Tokyo.

The worst commercial airline disaster occurred over the Grand Canyon June 30, 1956. A United Airlines DC7 and a Trans World Super Constellation collided and crashed to the rocks below with 128 killed.

The most disastrous single airplane crash in the history of commercial aviation occurred Aug. 14, 1958, when a KLM Royal Dutch airliner disappeared over the Atlantic with 96 aboard.

Other big crashes and the death tolls:

### Small Firms

## Victims Of New Racket

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### MANY WANT TO HELP EVANGELIST

## Graham Gets Offer Of Eyes

HONOLULU (AP)—One offer after another for a 63-year-old woman in Kentucky.

Another came from a Jewish businessman in New York City.

They were offering their lives to evangelist Billy Graham, afflicted with an ailment in his left eye.

The 63-year-old Protestant crusader received thousands of letters and telegrams expressing concern. They came from Catholics, Moslems and persons of many faiths. They came from prominent people and little people in many countries around the world.

Graham says he is overwhelmed and humbled.

Many persons, he says, write that they are praying for him.

He said he is sure the public does not want tax increases, deficit spending and cheapened dollars.

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