

July 25, 1929

TWO KILLED WHEN PLANE CRASHES TO GROUND SUNDAY

ALFRED ABELN, PILOT, AND HENRY LARSON DIE IN ILL-FATED SHIP

**BOTH BOYS SUFFER SEVERE
BODILY INJURIES WHEN
PLANE FALLS IN CORN FIELD
—FUNERALS WEDNESDAY.**

Alfred Abeln, 26, Groton aviator; and Henry Larson, 28, a passenger, met their death Sunday afternoon at about five o'clock, when the big yellow ship they were riding in, crashed to the ground in a corn field on the Schmick Johnson farm, northeast of Groton.

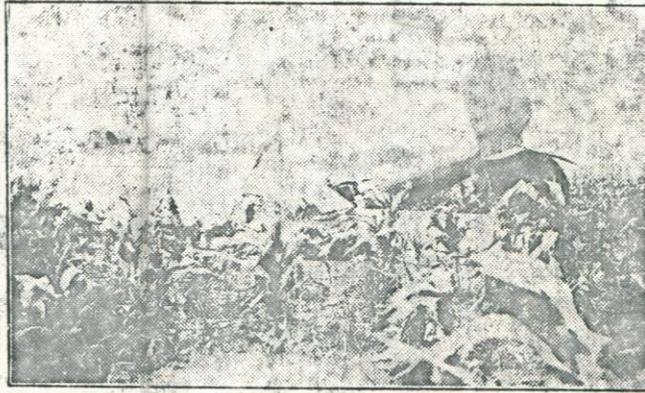
Since there are no survivors to tell the story of the accident, the underlying cause of the ship's fatal fall will perhaps never be known. The plane was practically a new one, and had been in service only this year. It had been flown successfully Sunday without indication of trouble in the engine or balling apparatus of the wings.

Louis Erickson and Oliver Belden are eye witnesses of the accident. They were about a half mile from the ship when it went into a tail-spin, and later fell to the earth.

"The ship seemed to be working perfectly," said Mr. Erickson. "Oliver Belden and I stood watching it. When the plane went into a tail-spin, it dived toward the ground. Abeln seemed to have control of it as it suddenly shot upward and then veered to the left. As it started on a bank, the motor, which we could not hear during the tail-spin, started and the ship curved downward, landing on its nose and left wing. The plane was probably 300 feet high when it fell."

The two above named gentlemen walked to the scene of the accident and found that both boys were slumped beneath the wreckage of the plane, whose downward swoop had probably been strengthened by the motor suddenly taking on new life. When they were pulled from under the ship, both were unconscious, and almost unrecognizable because of the dirt and grim which had settled on their features.

The plane was badly smashed right at the cockpit where the boys were



AS THE PLANE APPEARED AFTER THE WRECK IN CORN FIELD

second youngest of five brothers, Henry, Joe, Ed., and Clarence, and a sister, Miss Luella, who, together with his parents, survive him. He was born at Bancroft, Iowa, but had lived here the greater part of his life.

Larson a Farmer

Henry Larson, likewise, was a farmer, living near Groton, whose devotion to his mother was an outstanding exemplary trait of his character. Since the death of his father some years ago, "Heinie" as he was known to a host of friends, was looking after her affairs with marked efficiency and acumen. The old home place, northeast of Groton, on which his mother lives, and another near Lodgepole, requiring all of his time.

He is the oldest son of Mrs. Dick Strover, and besides his mother, is survived by five sisters and two brothers. The sisters are Mrs. Wm. Johnson, of Pierpont; Mrs. Walter VonWald, of Aberdeen; Mrs. Ora Baldry, of near Groton; Mrs. Albert Bonn, of Groton, and Mrs. Arthur Liedtke, of Lodgepole, who, together with her husband, had arrived on a visit an hour before Henry's death. The brothers are Alvin and Lawrence.

Ship is New One

The airplane in which the boys met their death was virtually a new one, and the second which the Abeln boys owned. The first was badly damaged by a cyclone early this spring, and the motor was taken from the old one and placed in a new cabin with new wings, fuselage, etc., and while the two Abeln boys had used the ship frequently this year, it was in splendid shape and considered extremely safe.



Above—Alfred Abeln, Groton aviator, who was killed when his plane went into a tail spin Sunday. Below—Henry Larson, passenger, who also met his death when the plane was wrecked.

cented, and it was some time before Messrs. Erickson and Belden were able to extract the victims from the wreckage.

Larson Killed Instantly

As soon as automobiles arrived, the victims were placed in cars and hurried to town. Larson, who suffered a fractured skull, broken neck, with legs broken in two or three places, probably died instantly or shortly after he was pulled from beneath the machine. Some seem to think that he showed slight signs of life on the way to town, but this is highly improbable when the extent of his injuries are considered.

Alfred Abeln lived about an hour after being brought to Groton and was placed under the doctors' care. But his injuries were so severe, that they were unable to do anything for him, and he passed away while in the doctor's office. He, too, was badly injured. His skull was fractured, and a deep gash cut around the eyes. Several ribs, his right hand and his left leg were broken in two places. There was also a cut in his groin.

Experienced Aviator

Mr. Abeln was an experienced aviator, having had about 200 hours in the air. He and his brother, Clarence, who had also piloted this and other planes for the past two or three years, were known as careful and cautious flyers, who never resorted to "stunt" flying or taking the air when there were indications of bad air or other elements which could be considered dangerous. He is a son of Mr. and Mrs. Joe Abeln, generous and highly respected farmers living northeast of Groton, and their admirable qualities are apparent in the children. There are perhaps no more gentlemanly or better behaved young fellows in this section of the state than the Abeln boys, particularly Alfred, whose untimely and shocking death is the subject of wide-spread sorrow among a large circle of friends. He is the

But now it is a wreck, with prospects for salvaging parts of the structure. When the ship started on its downward swoop, it landed on its nose and left wings. The carriage wheels were bent and twisted and the cock-pit caved in and smashed. It is said that the crank case of the motor is also damaged. The tail is partly torn from the body, and the left wing is virtually destroyed.

Inspector Views Wreck

An aviation inspector for North and South Dakota, Iowa and Minnesota, visited the scene of the accident Monday afternoon, and after hearing the circumstances of the ship's fatal fall, absolved the pilot of all blame. The inspector stated that the accident was probably caused by the ship encountering a pocket formed by ascending and descending air, the atmosphere Sunday being peculiarly adapted to such formations. All of which made planes hard to control and subject to tail spins.

Funerals Wednesday

The funerals of the two boys were held on Wednesday. Mr. Abeln's was held from the Catholic church of this city at ten o'clock, observed by a solemn high mass with Father McCage, of Conde, as deacon; Father Hyland, of Mellette, sub-deacon, and Fr. Garry, pastor of the church, as celebrant.

Mr. Larson's was held from the German Lutheran church of Groton at two o'clock in the afternoon, conducted by Philip S. Dybvig, and the remains of both were laid to rest in Groton cemetery. H. Paetznick was in charge of the funerals.

From Bill to Act

Before a "bill" becomes an "act" in Great Britain, it must be "read" three times in the house of commons and then sent to the house of lords for approval. When through both houses the bill is taken to the throne for the royal assent; this attained, it is no longer a "bill," but an "act of parliament."