

NAVAL PLANE CRASH.

WIRELESS OFFICER KILLED.

MANOEUVRES NEAR HOBART.

HOBART, March 20.

During nava! manoeuvres at Norfolk Bay to-day, a Seagull amphibian 'plane crashed. D. McGowan, wireless operator, of Sydney, was killed, and Lieut. Ian Elliott, of England, and Pilot Officer A. Grant, of Toowoomba, were injured.

Elliott sustained fractured bones in the hand and right ankle and a fractured shoulder, while Grant suffered injuries to the spine.

HURLED FROM 'PLANE.

Elliott and Grant were hurled out of the 'plane before it reached the water. McGowan was trapped and carried under water with the 'plane. Other 'planes rushed to the spot and picked up the injured men, who managed to keep afloat.

The men were taken aboard the destroyer Anzac and rushed to the Hobart hospital, where they were found to be suffering extensive injuries, Grant being most seriously hurt. The 'plane was later raised to the surface by means of the crane on the Albatross and McGowan's body was discovered in the battered remains. The engine of the 'plane was practically undamaged.

Squadron Leader Scriven, chief Air Force officer aboard the Albatross, was unable to account for the smash. He said the engine was in perfect condition, and the controls working perfectly.

Elliott's condition is fair and there is every hope that Grant will survive. The nature of the injuries to his back have not yet been ascertained.

A FATAL SPIN.

The accident was apparently due to a spin which the pilot was unable to correct. The 'plane was one of four carried aboard the seaplane carrier Albatross for manoeuvres with warships which had been doing gunnery practice at Norfolk Bay near Hobart.

The 'plane piloted by Grant was used for photographing the bombardment of the Isle of Canes by H.M.S. Australia. Atmospheric conditions were bumpy and flying conditions difficult. When about 2,000 feet high, the 'plane had just made a turn when it encountered a very bad bump in the air. It went into a

bad bump in the air. It went into a spin and the pilot was unable to right it.

The machine dropped to the sea like a stone, spinning round and round like a corkscrew all the time.

'PLANE CRASH.

Condition of Injured Officers.

INQUIRY INTO MCGOWAN'S DEATH.

HOBART, Thursday.

The condition of Pilot-Officer Grant, who was injured in a seaplane crash in Norfolk Bay yesterday, was greatly improved to-day, and every hope is entertained for his recovery. Medical opinion is that the injuries to his spine are not as serious as was feared.

A X-Ray examination of Lieutenant Ian D. Elliott revealed that his right foot is badly shattered, and it is feared that the lower part of the leg may have to be amputated.

An inquest on the body of Donald Osborn McGowan, the wireless operator, who was killed in the crash, was opened before the Coroner (Mr. H. O. White) this morning.

Dr. V. R. Ratten, surgeon superintendent of Hobart Public Hospital, who performed the post-mortem examination, said that there were no external injuries, apart from abrasions to the face and head. Death was due to drowning.

The inquest was adjourned until to-morrow morning, and will not be completed until Grant or Elliott is sufficiently recovered to give evidence.

The destroyer Success returned to port this morning, and the cruiser Canberra returned this afternoon.

McGowan is the third rating of the fleet who has died since the squadron has come to Hobart. A seaman died in hospital after being knocked over by a tram in Hobart, and another succumbed to an attack of pneumonia.

DONALD MCGOWAN'S FUNERAL.

The funeral of Donald McGowan was accorded full naval honours. Some 300 officers and men marched in the funeral cortege. Rear-Admiral Evans was represented by Flag-Lieutenant K. McDonald. The military district Base Commandant (Colonel H. Cox-Taylor) represented the Minister for Defence and the Military Board. The graveside service was conducted by the chaplain of H.M.A.S. Canberra (the Rev. A. Tulloh).

LATE MR. D. MCGOWAN.

Donald McGowan, the wireless operator who lost his life in Wednesday's accident, was well known in Parramatta. He joined the Tingira about seven years ago, and was trained on that vessel. He was exceedingly popular at the Parramatta Commercial School and the manual training classes at the Technical College at Granville, which he also attended. He was unmarried.

SEAPLANE TRAGEDY

Norfolk Bay Crash

Investigation Committee's Report

MELBOURNE, April 17.

In connection with the accident to Seagull A9-4 at Norfolk Bay, Tasmania, on March 19, the defence authorities announce that the following report has been received from the Air Accidents Investigation Committee:—

"Gunnery practice was being carried out by H.M.A.S. Australia and Canberra, and four flying boats were detailed to observe the fall of shot, the average height being 2,000ft. The machines had been observing approximately one hour, when A9-4 went into a spin and crashed, the pilot (Officer A. G. Grant, R.A.A.F.), the observer (Lieutenant I. D. Elliot, R.N.) being injured, and the telegraphist (D. A. McGowan) being killed.

"The Committee find that the accident arose from the pilot stalling the machine while endeavouring to make a quick turn to facilitate photographic work, which stall may have been accentuated by the bumpy conditions existing at the time."