



Dejected after copy of the Silver Dart crashed at Baddeck, N.S., is pilot Wing-Commander Paul Hartman. Part of crowd at crash scene is reflected in his helmet visor.

## Baddeck Crash Marks Anniversary of Flight

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Baddeck, N.S., Feb. 23—Time flew back through half a century for a brief minute today and almost brought disaster to this Cape Breton Island village, the focal point of 50th anniversary celebration of flight in Canada.

The Silver Dart, the copy of the original flimsy aircraft that made the first flight in 1909 across frozen Baddeck Bay, crashed on its history-marking repeat of the flight made by J. A. D. McCurdy in the original aircraft 50 years ago today.

The crash itself was almost the minor point of observances. Throughout the celebrations, RCMP were worried that the more than 4,000 people who flocked to the ice-covered bay would congregate on the bay's thin centre area and be plunged into icy waters. At the end of celebrations a jet fighter, caught in a vicious turbulence, momentarily dropped out of formation in a low-level fly-past and brought gasps from many of the densely packed crowd it was passing over.

Police were hard put to control the crowd when the Silver Dart, piloted by Wing Commander Paul Hartman of Ottawa, crashed about a minute after it took off to re-enact the history-making flight before an assembly of dignitaries and local inhabitants.

Hartman emerged from the maze of bamboo poles and wires that made up the aircraft without injury. However, the left wing was torn to a tangled mess and the bicycle-wheel undercarriage was crumpled. The damage will take months to correct before the craft can be placed on display in the aircraft museum in Ottawa.

The crash was a personal tragedy for 25-year-old RCAF LAC Lionel McCaffrey of Calgary. He saw two years of personal work and pride of accomplishment dashed before his eyes.

McCaffrey, probably as much as the original Dart's pilot, contributed the spark that brought the golden anniversary celebration into being. He built a working model of the plane that fired the RCAF into supporting his plan to build a copy of the Flying Kite.

When the crash came, McCaf-

frey rushed to his dream child and momentarily collapsed after looking at the damage.

Officials debated up to the last moment whether the re-enactment should be staged because chilly 20-mile-an-hour winds were gusting to more than 40 with turbulence created by the hills cradling the lake area, located 50 miles north of Sydney.

Hartman's takeoff was abrupt, almost a duplicate of the take-off made by Canada's oldest pilot and Nova Scotia's former Lieutenant-Governor who witnessed today's re-enactment. After flying a few hundred feet at an altitude of about 60 feet a sudden updraft caught the machine and almost sent it into a loop.

Hartman, one of Canada's most versatile pilots with 60 different types of planes in his log book, levelled the Dart and started to bring it down when a sudden downdraft sent it crashing from a height of slightly less than 15 feet.

Mr. McCurdy, witnessing the flight from a point on the bay which his mentor, Dr. Alexander Graham Bell, occupied 50 years ago, was visibly shaken by the incident.

At a civic reception at the village's Legion Hall he accepted a scroll making him an honorary air commodore of the RCAF, a distinction that it took an act of Parliament to create.

For Canada's grand old man of aviation, it was a rank he justly earned.

He crashed his original Silver Dart at Petawawa, Ont., while trying to interest the government in creating a flying force. Thus he might easily be considered the father of the RCAF.

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