

Eitner, Robert G.

## Dean Congdon's Son-In-Law Killed In Coast Plane Crash

JAN 11 1945

Robert Gaylord Eitner, co-pilot of an American Airlines passenger plane, was killed yesterday when his plane crashed and burned in the vicinity of Burbank, Calif., killing all 24 passengers on board.

Mr. Eitner was married two years ago this month to June Congdon, daughter of Dean and Mrs. Wray H. Congdon, of 1227 Lorain Avenue. Mrs. Eitner telephoned Wednesday night that she plans to return East with her husband's body as soon as it can be recovered and sent to the home of his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Walter E. Eitner, of Summit, N. J.

He was a student in the College of Business Administration at Lehigh University with the class of 1942. It was while he was at the university that he took the government's C. A. A. pilot training course after completion of which he was assigned to pilot duty with the American Airlines. He had expected to receive his captaincy and his own ship within the next few weeks.

Victims in the plane crash included twenty-one passengers—three from the Navy and 18 from the Army—and a crew of three. The plane, arriving from New York by way of Washington, Cincinnati, Memphis, Dallas, El Paso and Phoenix, reached the Lockheed Air Terminal in Burbank at 4:08 a. m., but was prevented from landing by fog, and Capt. Joseph R. McCauley told the control tower that he would try to land at an emergency field 30 miles to the northeast at Palmdale.

Instead of turning to the right for Palmdale, airline attaches said, he apparently swung to the left. The plane flying low was heard over various Southern California



ROBERT GAYLORD EITNER

... Lehigh man dies in crash

towns during the next hour. At 5:10 Capt. McCauley was heard calling Palmdale but evidently could not hear its replies, for he kept excitedly repeating his calls.

Several hours later, after the fog had lifted, the wreckage was sighted with field glasses from the airport control tower. Searchers had a three-hour climb up a steep canyon to the scene of the crash. Parts of the plane were strewn over a wide area, and only the rudder and one wing were intact. Occupants were in or near the wreckage.

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