

# Manufacturer, 5 Others Injured In Plane Crash

A nationally-known Michigan manufacturer remained in a critical condition today after sustaining injuries in an airplane crash at Charlotte Municipal Airport when three other men and two women were injured.

Frank R. Pierce, president of Dearborn Motors Inc. of Detroit, sustained several severe injuries about the head and body and was listed as "critical" at Charlotte Memorial Hospital this morning. Slight improvement overnight was observed in his condition, the hospital reported.

Reports on the others injured were:

Mrs. Latta Johnston of 831 Poinseta Rd., Columbia, S. C., satisfactory condition, but probably will remain in the hospital several days.

Latta Johnston, associated with R. S. Dickson & Co., Charlotte securities dealer, fair condition.

Mrs. Pierce, wife of the Michigan industrialist, good condition.

W. J. Brgman, 35, pilot of the Grumman amphibian Mallard, of

Grose Isle, Mich., good condition and improving steadily.

George Findley, 37, co-pilot, of Dearborn, Mich., good condition.

## CAUGHT FIRE

The crash occurred on take-off in mid-afternoon yesterday. The plane crumpled against an embankment near the former Douglas Airport administration building, on the northwest side of the field. The wreck, immediately burst into flames.

Almost simultaneously with the crash, the alarm was sounded by the Air National Guard headquarters and the Civil Aeronautics Administration men in the airport control tower. National Guardsmen began fighting the flames pending the prompt arrival of firemen from the airport station. The blaze soon was extinguished and no explosion occurred.

All the injured passengers were removed from the wreckage before they sustained severe burns. Shortly thereafter they were removed by ambulances to Memorial Hospital.

## CAUSE UNKNOWN

An official report regarding the cause of the crash was still lacking today.

Mr. Pierce's most serious injury was about the head, according to medical sources. These reports indicated that only a few bones of the injured men and women were broken. The more severe injuries for all others, besides Mr. Pierce, were about the head.

The plane capsized after bouncing along the ground about 100 yards. Witnesses said that the craft, on the take-off attempt, had gained only about fifteen feet of altitude when the right wing dipped. When the pilot attempted to level off, the craft fell to the runway and bounced back into the air, apparently out of control.

David M. Rea, airport manager, credited the airport firemen and National Guardsmen with saving the lives of the passengers.

J. R. Surtman of Charlotte, president of Carolina Ford Tractor Co., was host to Mr. and Mrs. Pierce and their guests. Mr. Surtman's company is Carolina's distributor for Ford tractors and the Dearborn lines of farm equipment. He had taken Mr. and Mrs. Pierce and their guests to the airport and witnessed the take-off accident.

Mr. Pierce intended to take Mr. and Mrs. Johnston to their Columbia home.

Mr. Pierce flew to North Carolina primarily to address an agricultural meeting in Nashville. Agriculture Secretary Brannan was a passenger in this airplane on the flight from Detroit to Nashville. The Secretary went to Washington and Mr. and Mrs. Pierce flew Tuesday to Charlotte.

Mr. Pierce formerly was vice-president of General Motors Corp. and of Nash-Kelvinator Corp.

## Massie Leads VMI Alumni

Hardin Massie is the new president of the VMI alumni chapter of Charlotte.

He was chosen last night at a meeting at his home to succeed Samuel L. Hayes. Other officers are Henry Sancey, vice-president; and J. P. Hackney Jr., secretary and treasurer.

New members of the executive committee are Dr. B. D. Spencer, Walter Scott, Eli B. Springs, Martin Cannon and Charlie Holtzclaw.

Talks were made by Tom Nugent, VMI football coach, and Cherry Watkins, a member of the school's original "flying squadron" team. Color films of some of last year's games were shown.

It was announced that the VMI team will be seen in Charlotte next season in a game with Davidson College. Other VMI opponents will be Texas A&M, William & Mary and the University of Virginia.

Tentative plans for attendance of VMI alumni and wives at VMI graduation exercises next month were made. Gen. George C. Marshall, VMI alumnus, will speak.

## Blind Association Directors To Meet

The board of directors of the Mecklenburg Association for the Blind will meet tonight at 7:30 P.