

# THREE KILLED; 11 INJURED TANK ACCIDENT NEAR FOXTON

A military tank accident involving the death of one officer and two other ranks and injuries to one officer and ten other ranks occurred during training near Foxton yesterday.

## KILLED.

Second-Lieutenant J. TRANSON.

Private G. E. ALGIE.

Private C. F. McINTYRE.

## DANGEROUSLY INJURED.

Private E. C. C. LETT, laceration of scalp, dislocated right hip.

Corporal P. A. DAVIES, fractured skull.

Corporal E. H. T. WILLIAMS, fractured pelvis.

## INJURED.

Captain C. M. GARDINER, fractured ankle.

Private J. HICKISEY, lacerated left arm.

Private A. J. BARTLETT, burns right leg.

Sergeant E. METEKINGI, burns arm.

Private J. GRUMMITT, injuries to hip and wrist.

Private G. A. JENNER, injuries to leg and back.

Private J. J. C. ALLEN, injuries to shoulder.

Private R. H. JONES, minor injuries to ankle.

The tank was operating in sandhill country, and the cause of the accident was apparently due to the breaking away of a bank on the edge of which the tank was travelling. Commendable resource and promptitude was displayed by all ranks at the scene of the accident, and the injured men were speedily extricated. Their injuries were treated by medical officers on the spot, and the men were conveyed to hospital by ambulance. The accident occurred at about 10.15 a.m., and a Court of Inquiry was assembled in the field about four hours later.

All the next-of-kin have been advised.

<sup>1</sup> National Library of New Zealand. Papers Past. Evening Post, Volume CXXXV, Issue 48, 26 February 1943, Page 3. <http://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/cgi-bin/paperspast?a=d&cl=search&d=EP19430226.2.11&srpos=62&e=-----10--61----Otank+accident-->

<sup>2</sup> National Library of New Zealand. Papers Past. Auckland Star, Volume LXXIV, Issue 48, 26 February 1943, Page 4. <http://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/cgi-bin/paperspast?a=d&cl=search&d=AS19430226.2.80&srpos=133&e=-----10--131----Otank+accident-->

# TANK TRAGEDY

## EVIDENCE AT INQUEST

### SLOW SPEED FACTOR

3 4

(P.A.) PALMERSTON N., This Day.

An inquest regarding the deaths of Second Lieutenant J. Transom (Taihape), Privates G. E. Algie (Hawera), C. F. McIntyre (Whakatane), and E. C. C. Lett (Wanganui), who died from injuries when a military tank overturned near Foxton on February 25, was opened by Mr. A. J. Graham (Coroner).

Captain F. C. Hutchison, N.Z.M.C., said he found that the tank overturned at the foot of a 10-foot bank. A number of men were lying about and others, some dead, were pinned under the tank. He did what he could for the injured men. Of those pinned underneath three were dead. He had no doubt they died instantaneously, for all three had sustained crushing injuries to the chest and head. One of the seriously injured men, Lett, subsequently died.

Growcott, driver of the tank, said that Transom was in command. Driving along a well-defined track he received the order "Drive right." He did so, and travelled about 100 yards through scrub up a small gully. The tank would be six feet from a cabbage tree when he complied with another order "Drive right." He carried on slowly for a short distance. He felt the tank slipping, and pulled the control in order to get the tank to "nose" downhill. The tank failed to answer and rolled over.

In reply to the Coroner Growcott said they were driving with the tank "open." He could not see where they were going owing to dense manuka through which they were travelling. He received his driving orders through a telephone. There were infantrymen on the tank, though he could not say how many. He had been warned to go steadily because there were infantry aboard. He was going very slowly at the time of the accident, and he considered that had the tank been travelling faster it would have answered the controls. The accident would not have happened if the tank had not slipped away.

Major A. H. Revell, Officer Commanding the Squadron, stated that the tanks were under the command of Transom and Captain Hancock. Both men knew the country very well. The route they would take was left to the discretion of the tank commanders Transom, although young, was very capable, a quick thinker, and most reliable. His action in deviating from his course was tactically quite sound. The reason for the change was to avoid crossing the skyline where two other tanks had gone across.

The Coroner stated that two factors appeared to have caused the accident—the collapse of the bank and the fact that the tank was going too slow.

Major Revell replied that the slow speed was a matter of caution.

The Coroner commended the rescue work done so expeditiously. He returned a verdict that the men were accidentally killed.



VICTIMS OF TANK ACCIDENT.—  
Upper left, 2nd Lt. J. Transom; upper right, Pte. G. E. Algie; lower left, Pte. C. F. McIntyre; lower right, Pte. E. C. C. Lett. These soldiers lost their lives in an accident during tank manoeuvres at Foxton.

<sup>3</sup> National Library of New Zealand. Papers Past. Auckland Star, Volume LXXIV, Issue 50, 1 March 1943, Page 4. <http://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/cgi-bin/paperspast?a=d&cl=search&d=AS19430301.2.46.4&srpos=59&e=-----10--51---0tank+accident-->

<sup>4</sup> National Library of New Zealand. Papers Past. Evening Post, Volume CXXXV, Issue 78, 2 April 1943, Page 4. <http://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/cgi-bin/paperspast?a=d&cl=search&d=EP19430402.2.35&srpos=119&e=-----10--111---0tank+accident-->

## **CRASH OF TANK FOURTH MAN DEAD**

(P.A.) PALMERSTON N., this day.

One of the men reported to have been dangerously injured when a tank overturned near Foxton on Thursday died in hospital on Saturday. He was:—

**Private E. C. C. Lett**, of 68, Carlton Avenue, Wanganui.

The accident occurred during training operations when a tank was operating in sandhill country, and as a result one officer and two men were killed, three men were dangerously injured, and one officer and seven men injured.

Private Lett's injuries were reported to be a dislocated right hip and laceration of the scalp.