

# WGN Copter Crash; 2 Die

## Irv Hayden, Pilot Killed in Bellwood

BY DAVID SCHNEIDEMAN

A fiery helicopter crash yesterday took the lives of WGN-Radio's "Eye in the Sky," Patrolman Irwin [Irv] Hayden, and the helicopter's pilot in a vacant suburban Bellwood lot.

The veteran policeman and the pilot, David Demarest, 29, of 2700 N. Hampden Ct., died when the helicopter struck a utility pole and three high-voltage power lines and exploded on the ground at 900 Cernan Dr., in the suburb.

Police said eyewitness accounts of the crash indicate the helicopter may have been buffeted out of control by high gusts of winds which had moved into the area about the time of the crash at 4:20 p. m.

The helicopter knocked down the 70-foot pole carrying the power lines, blacking out Bellwood, Maywood and Westchester for nearly two hours.

The explosion from the crash blew out panes of glass in a bay window and basement windows of the Anthony Parra residence at 912 Cernan Dr., across the street from the crash scene.

### Trapped in Wreckage

Hayden, 52, of 1536 W. Thome Av., whose voice was familiar to millions of rush hour motorists during the last 11 years, and Demarest were trapped in the flaming wreckage.

It was the second fatal accident in WGN-Radio's helicopter traffic service. The station pioneered the service, which



Irv Hayden



### Wife Always Feared for Irv

Page 2

began as a daily feature in 1958.

In May, 1960, Patrolman Leonard Baldy and H. G. Ferry, his pilot, were killed when their helicopter threw a main rotor blade and crashed in flames in a railroad yard at Hubbard Street and Milwaukee Avenue.

Hayden, who was spending his first day on the job yesterday after a European vacation, took over the sky patrol shortly after Baldy's death.

### Sees Copter in Trouble

Shortly before the crash yesterday, Michael Ewanic, 18, of 3202 Wilcox Av., Bellwood, noticed the helicopter was in trouble as he stood in front of his home.

Ewanic said the craft, a Bell Ranger, was at a very low altitude, less than 100 feet, and repeatedly dipped and tilted to one side. He called to his father, Roman, 53, and the two

followed the helicopter's flight for a block and a half, until it hit the utility pole and crashed.

"The helicopter seemed to go up and down," Ewanic said, "like the pilot was trying to right the copter."

Just before the crash, he said, the helicopter started to gain altitude, but then tilted to the side and hit the pole.

### Wind Was Strong

Frank Zito, of 1013 Eastern Av., Bellwood, also was standing in front of his home when he noticed the helicopter going overhead to the southeast.

"I thought at the time the wind was too strong for the helicopter," Zito said. "Then I heard a pop, and the next thing I knew it came over again backwards, headed northeast and making a funny noise."

"It started going around and

[Continued on page 2, col. 1]

Blocked due to copyright.  
See full page image or  
microfilm.

Wreck of WGN traffic helicopter which crashed in vacant lot in Bellwood. The helicopter hit several high-voltage wires and burst into flames when it hit the ground.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

# WGN Copter Crew Killed in Crash

[Continued from first page]

around in circles out of control."

Bellwood firemen and policemen were on the scene moments after the crash, but were unable to save the two men. They blocked off the area to keep people away from the live wires which came down with the pole.

A spokesman said one of the lines carried 34,000 volts for industries in the three suburbs which lost power, and the two other lines carried 12,000 volts each for homes in the suburbs.

## Joined Force in 1948

Demarest was employed by the Chicago Helicopter Airways, Inc., 5240 W. 63d St., which rented the helicopter to WGN Continental Broadcasting Co.

Hayden, who is survived by his widow, Margaret, and three children, joined the police department in 1948, and had worked in various phases of traffic control since then.

In his mission to guide motorists thru the maze of traffic-choked expressways and streets during the daily rush hours, he flew more than 250 miles a day.

## Called for Help

Hayden did not limit his observations from the helicopter entirely to traffic, however. More than once he spotted people in distress on the streets below, and radioed police headquarters for help.

Occasionally he and his pilots would spot dogs stranded on the winter ice of Lake Michigan, and they would dip their craft down to herd the animals toward land.

He attended St. Alphonsus Elementary School, Lane Technical High School, and Wright Junior College. He was a decorated Army veteran of World War II. Active in veteran affairs, he was named American Veteran of Illinois in 1956-57, and devoted much of his off-duty time at veterans hospitals.