

I remember

Margaret Mott (Nee Gutteridge) AAMWS

The Liberator Bomber crash at Darwin, 2 November 1945, on route from Morotai to Melbourne

I remember I was one of the many AAMWS and sisters sitting on our kit bags and the mail bags in the main body of the Liberator. Standing in front of us were a number of male RAAF members, holding onto the frame of the fuselage - with their fingers crossed.

When the plane crashed and came to a halt, we scrambled out onto the wings, our backsides being smacked to get us out! We jumped to the ground and as we dashed across the red sands to the fringes of the airstrip, the plane blew up and burnt to the ground. The melted remains of my watch, with my name on the back was returned to me by one of the airstrip personnel after the crash site cooled down.

We were incredibly lucky. My RAAF husband stationed on an airstrip in Borneo, recalls with horror the number of planes crashing and blowing up with no survivors.

The rest of the flight home remains very hazy. Due to having 'tropical ear' from learning to back-dive from a pontoon off the beach at Morotai.

I'd had liberal doses of 'morph and aspirin' on Morotai, several times in Darwin and also at Alice Springs, I arrived in Adelaide on a 'morphine high'. But I do remember being given a bath to remove the red dust and being put to bed by AAMWS friends. Being the only 2/5th member, I left the group in Melbourne, returning home unexpectedly to my parents in my red dust stained safari jacket and trousers. They were thrilled to see me, and reacted in amazement as news of the plane crash had not been in the Melbourne papers - only in the Daily Telegraph in Sydney.