



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
INFORMATION SERVICE

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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VETERAN FWS MEN—PLANE CRASH VICTIMS—GIVEN TRIBUTE

Two plane crash victims, Refuge Manager Clarence S. Johnson and Game Management Agent Pilot Roy R. Ferguson, were described today by Acting Director Clarence Cottam and other officials of the Fish and Wildlife Service as men of high abilities and fine character. The two men were killed August 24 when their small plane crashed near the Lower Souris National Wildlife Refuge in North Dakota.

Johnson, 55, and Ferguson, 43, were flying over a wheat field near the refuge in an effort to raise ducks off a sluice. At about 7:50 in the evening the plane made a sharp turn — the upper wing seeming to catch the wind — and flopped over. Ferguson, the pilot, seemed to be straightening out the flight but the plane was too close to the ground and crashed. Witnesses reported that another 25 feet would have been enough for a recovery.

The plane did not strike the ground hard, the enveloping flames prevented any rescue attempts. The bodies were burned beyond recognition; identification was made by the radio ear-phones on Ferguson and boots on Johnson. CAA authorities stated unofficially that there seemed no evidence of mechanical failure. The investigation has not been completed.

Clarence S. Johnson, born at Iron River, Michigan, April 7, 1894, graduated from the University of Wisconsin with a BS in agriculture in 1920, and first joined the Service in June 1935 as camp superintendent of a CCC camp at Germflask, Michigan. From June 1933 to June 1935 he was a technician with the CCC Michigan State Division at Lansing.

February 1936 Johnson was appointed refuge manager at the Seney National Wildlife Refuge in Michigan, and on June 22, 1949 he was transferred to the Lower Souris.

Johnson's body was returned to Iron River, Michigan, for burial. He is survived by his wife and five children.

Roy R. Ferguson was born at Granton, Wisconsin, on December 10, 1906. He was a pilot prior to his employment on the Upper Mississippi Wildlife and Fish Refuge in 1937 as game management agent, stationed at La Crosse. He became game management agent and pilot, also at La Crosse, on February 13, 1947.

Ferguson's body was returned to La Crosse, where his wife, Mina, and two sons and a daughter live.

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