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The Outlook

H.R.H. The Duke of Kent

IN time of war the daily publication of casualty lists brings grief to very many families and sympathetic distress to people in general throughout all parts of the Empire, but amidst all this mourning a special sense of shock and horror fell upon one and all at the news that Air Commodore H.R.H. the Duke of Kent had been killed in the crash of a Sunderland. The thoughts of everyone turned in heartfelt sympathy to the beautiful widowed Duchess and her children, to H.M. the King and to all the Royal Family.

Fatal air accidents are, fortunately, rare in these days, and those eminent people whose duty takes them about the world usually, we feel sure, enter their aircraft with a feeling of comfortable security, mingled with thankfulness that they are not obliged to face the perils of travel by sea. Transport by air has, in fact, become almost synonymous with safety. The precautions taken to make everything secure would certainly not be less elaborate when Royalty was among the passengers than when Prime Ministers or Ambassadors have to cross the Atlantic; yet fate has chosen to throw the leading family in the Empire into mourning.

It is many years since the mischances of war have taken toll of the British Royal Family. In the South African War, Queen Victoria lost a grandson, and some years before that, in 1896, Princess Beatrice lost her

husband, Prince Henry of Battenberg, from illness contracted in the Ashanti war. In the last world war the present King and the Duke of Windsor were in action on sea and land, but both survived unscathed.

The Duke of Kent had a long connection with flying, though he was more intimately connected with the Royal Navy than with the Royal Air Force. During the reign of King George V he flew much as a passenger in company with his brother, then the Prince of Wales, covering many miles by air when the two brothers visited South America in 1934. In 1937 he was gazetted Group Captain in the R.A.F., and he was also Hon. Air-Commodore in the A.A.F. He was promoted to Air Vice-Marshal, but in 1940, when he began active work with the R.A.F. as Welfare Officer, he relinquished that rank and reverted to Group Captain. Recently he was promoted to Air Commodore. Ever since the outbreak of war he has been engaged in helping the King by visiting and inspecting Service stations, factories, and generally doing the work by which Royalty in this country cheers up fighters and workers and inspires them to give of their best. Had His Royal Highness



Air Commodore H.R.H. the Duke of Kent, K.G., K.T., G.C.M.G., G.C.V.O.

survived the war, still greater opportunities for valuable work would have lain before him as Governor General of Australia. Australians had rejoiced at the prospect of having the King's brother at Government House. The Duke was starting on a war mission to Iceland when the tragedy occurred which put an end to a life which has been full of useful public duty.