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2 AF Officers Feared Lost In Md. Crash

General and Major Vanish in Potomac As Plane Is Ditched

Maj. Gen. James C. Selser, Jr., deputy director of the Net Evaluation Subcommittee of the National Security Council, was reported missing last night with another Air Force officer after their L-28 Aero Commander crash-landed in the Potomac River, five miles from Bolling Air Force Base.

The pilot, First Lt. Richard B. Perlich said, the 44-year-old general and Maj. Jose Blonde, 34, commander of the 1104th Base Flight Squadron at Bolling, escaped from the plane but disappeared while swimming to shore in the cold water.



Gen. Selser

Perlich, a flight instructor, said they were coming from Dobbins Air Force Base in Atlanta and were lining up for the landing approach at Bolling when the engines quit.

He said they decided to ditch in the river and try to swim. The plane came in about 300 feet from shore opposite Riverview rd., Bethesda, Prince Georges County.

Perlich said he was swimming 45 feet behind the other two officers when he heard a call for help. He said he lost sight of the others.

Perlich made his way to a house on Riverview rd., and called for help. He was then taken to the base hospital where he was treated for shock and exposure.

Crash boats from the field along with the Coast Guard and neighboring fire departments began a search of the lonely, dark stretch of river where the plane disappeared.

Gen. Selser was with the Strategic Air Command until last year when he joined the Security Council. He entered the Air Force as a flying cadet in 1933.

The twin-engine Aero Commander is the same model plane used by President Eisenhower on short hops, such as to his Gettysburg farm.