



## Alberta Aviation Museum Association

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# Hunt for the Mad Trapper Part Four

## *The Tide is Turning*

Much has happened between January 16<sup>th</sup> and January 30<sup>th</sup> 1932.

The RCMP has been hot on the trail of **The Mad Trapper, Alberta Johnson** with the assistance of local trappers and band members, The Royal Canadian Corps of Signals providing two-way radio communication and Western Canada Airways air-dropping supplies.

Temperatures have been falling as low as -45 to -49 degrees with intermittent blizzard conditions. Equipment is reaching its limits, radio batteries begin freezing and with no way to keep them dry, clothing and sleeping bags become damp, frozen and unusable.

January 30<sup>th</sup> brings this chapter to a climax...Constable Millen is killed.

A tedious task, the RCMP Team had been tracking Johnson for weeks. Johnson was well-skilled in bush survival and as an experienced tracker he also knew how to avoid being tracked. As a result the RCMP and its team were forced to travel in sweeping half circles to pick up the fugitive's trail.

On the morning of January 30<sup>th</sup> two teams, Riddell/Garland and Millen/Verville, found Albert Johnson's overnight campsite. Riddell and Garland made a secure position while Millen and Verville settled a short distance across from them.

Once again a fire fight ensued with many shots being exchanged. Spotting Johnson's firing position, Millen dropped to one knee and fired twice; Johnson replied with three shots, one killing RCMP member Millen. Sporadic shots continued to be exchanged in the hours until dark when the RCMP team was forced to retire.

RCMP Constable Riddell and one of the native guides and their teams of dogs again made a record run to Aklavik carrying Constable Millen's body. By February 3<sup>rd</sup> they were ready to run supplies back to the rest of the pursuit team that had remained behind.

On the evening of February 2<sup>nd</sup>, the Royal Canadian Corp of signals hears the announcement on Edmonton Journal Radio that Western Canadian Airways is sending a plane with its most experienced young airman- Edmontonian WOP May is now enroute in the "Lady Edmonton," a Bellanca Pacemaker bush plane. The tide is starting to turn. Time is slowly running out for the "Mad Trapper."

Compiled using information from these sources and great sources of additional information on the "Hunt for the Mad Trapper".

<http://www.wopmay.com/adventures/madTrapper.htm>

<http://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/hist/hh-ps/trap-eng.htm>

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Albert...%28criminal%29>

[http://www.nwtandy.rcsigs.ca/stories/rat\\_river.htm](http://www.nwtandy.rcsigs.ca/stories/rat_river.htm)

<http://www.nwtandy.rcsigs.ca/stories/may.htm>

[http://www.nwtandy.rcsigs.ca/stories/flight\\_log.htm](http://www.nwtandy.rcsigs.ca/stories/flight_log.htm)

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