

Eugene B. "Crash" Hetherly lifts off for a run.

Crash . . . Dash . . . and the Greening of Holy Sepulchre

By JOHN DASH

The Lenten phrase "Remember man that thou art dust," churned through my mind as I ducked the slicing rotors and climbed into the Hughes 269-A helicopter.

The pilot, Crash Hetherly, helped strap me in and suddenly the serene quiet of the graveyard groaned in the thunder of liftoff.

Elmira Churches Slate Lectures

Elmira — An unusual ecumenical venture between the Christian Institute of Man (CIM) and several of the Protestant church groups in the area will get under way next month in the form of a continuing education program titled *Mysticism: the Personal Experience of God*.

The lecture series will be divided into two parts and will be held in Downtown Elmira Park Church. The first part will run Oct. 30 — Dec. 4; the second will run Jan. 8 — Feb. 12.

Crash headed the craft west. I gripped the buckle of my seat belt and felt it loosen; and on the first turn of the helicopter I slid slightly toward the gaping depths of air. That Greek sandwich I had for lunch started telegraphing messages.

It was a routine trip for the pilot. I knew that and steered myself. It wouldn't do to panic at

the thought of a hollow screaming fall to the graveyard below.

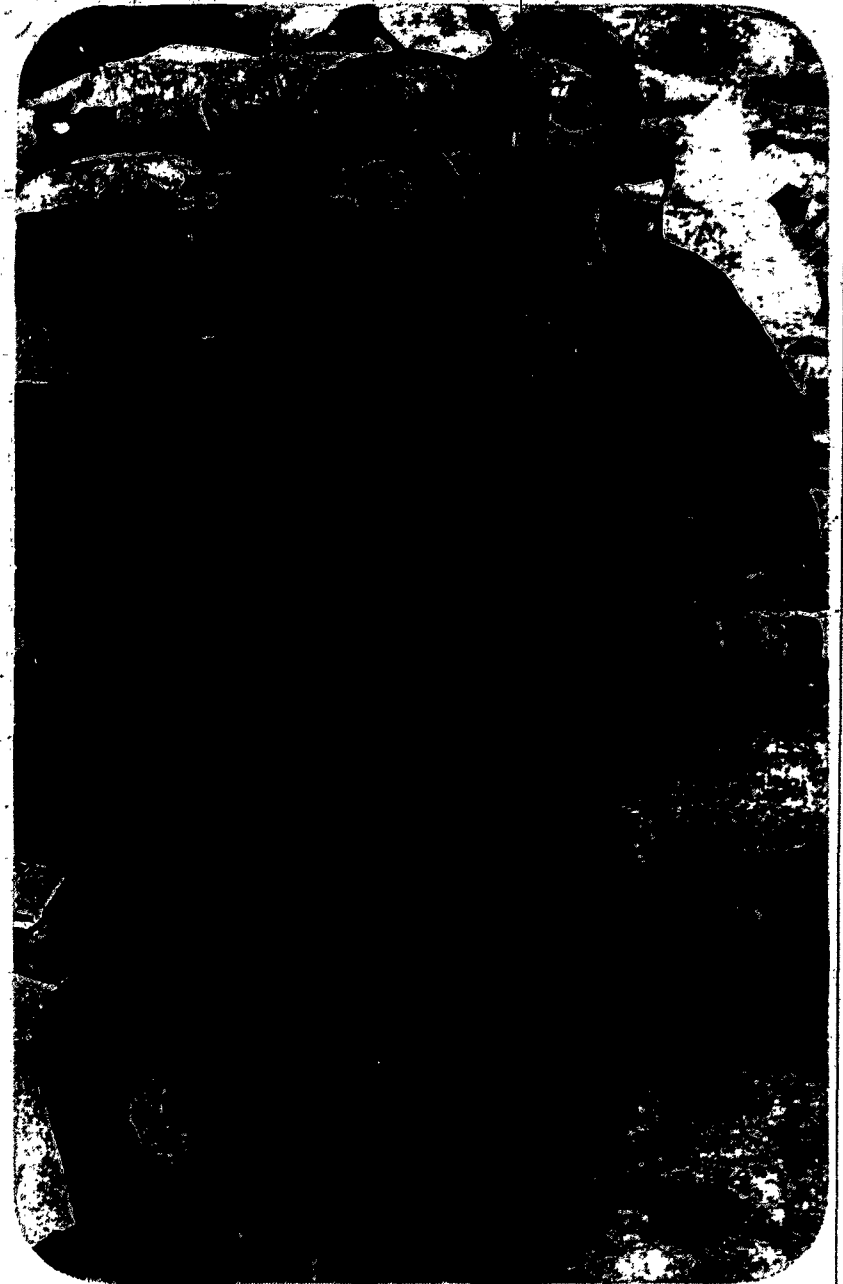
Stenciled on the dusty chopper were the words *Elba*, and less visible, *Crop Dusting*. Mounted beneath the words, like pollen balls on the legs of a bee, were yellow bins filled with the dry granules of *Ortho Grow Lawn Feed*.

This mission was simple: to fertilize Holy Sepulchre Cemetery. And the pilot knew the operation well. Hadn't he said, "I've been flying since I was 14, 1938"?

But as Robert Vogt, the head of the cemetery, had noted, "It's a real first for us," when discussing the task of fertilizing the grounds from above.

Crash's company, however, had done *Forest Lawn* in Buffalo earlier in the season.

The whirlybird headed east toward *St. Bernard's Seminary*. Through the dusty bubble, the imposing sandstone structure



Reporter Dash with the goods.

glowed in the September sun. I felt my legs growing weaker by the second.

The mission meant spreading 200 pounds of the material over each acre. In this phase of the operation a little less than 100 acres of the 400 would be covered. Vogt said he expected the mechanical cost to be less by doing the job from the air, but noted concern over the price rise in fertilizers.

As Crash headed toward a bank of trees separating an older part of the cemetery from un-

developed acres, I forced my clenched hands open. A gust of wind chilled the sweat riveting down the length of my back.

Crash checked the buffeting breeze and slowly pushed the copter to ground.

It was a routine run for the pilot.

For me it wasn't. And as I began, late that evening, to make my report, I noticed a nearly full moon rising in the sky.

End of caper.



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