

Car Rams Bridge, Two Persons Die

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE)

several hundred yards watching the brief search for the vehicle.

The crowd hampered early efforts of law enforcement officials and the Escambia Search and Rescue unit to set up equipment and direct the search from the bridge.

State Patrol troopers were on the scene 10 minutes after the wreck and Search and Rescue members, headed by E. E. McGovern, director, arrived a few minutes later. Divers began probing the muddy waters about 7:30 and brought the bodies up about 8:25 p.m.

The wrecked car was raised by a crane of the Merritt Construction Co. about 9 p.m.

The scene was illuminated by a portable electric generator from the County Search and Rescue squad.

Mrs. Melvin is survived by two children of a previous marriage, a daughter, Mrs. Beverly Ann Chapman and a son, Jimmy Avery, 8. Mr. and Mrs. Melvin had one child, Dewayne, 14 months.

Melvin was staff manager of Western and Southern Life Insurance Co., here.

Assisting in the search were Gulf Breeze police, Santa Rosa Deputy William Stephens, Lt. R. C. Ward of the Escambia sheriff's office and four cars of the Florida Highway Patrol, including auxiliaries who helped direct traffic.

Two other drivers witnessed the crash. They were Rex Hadley, 99 High Point Drive, and Ira E. Varden of Panama City. They are believed to have been drivers of the two cars which the Melvin vehicle almost hit as it crossed of the center-line and two lanes of southbound traffic before crashing through the bridge.

Auto Located, Bodies Found After Disaster

Search and Rescue
Divers Make Find
In 30-Foot Water

A Pensacola man and his wife were killed Saturday night when their 1959 automobile crashed through Pensacola Bay Bridge and plunged into the Escambia Bay.

The bodies of Roy Luverne Melvin, 40, and his wife, Eleanor Dilusto Melvin, 38, of 821 Fairfax Drive, were taken from the submerged car about 8:25 p.m. by skindivers of the Escambia County Search and Rescue Squad.

The auto was headed north when it crossed the median strip of the four-lane highway and knocked down two sections of the west side bridge railing in its plunge into the bay about 6:25 p.m.

Highway Patrol Sgt. R. P. Farrior quoted witnesses as saying the Melvin car narrowly missed hitting two other cars which were approaching in the southbound lane. The Melvin auto went behind one car and in front of another before it hit the bridge rail, he said.

The auto was located in 30 feet of water, about 90 feet from where it went through the side of the bridge. The top was crushed, the windshield broken and both doors closed, skindivers reported.

The accident occurred within a mile of where another driver was killed in a similar accident soon after the bridge opened. The Melvin car went off the bridge about half way between the "hump" and the Santa Rosa County, or south end, of the three-mile-long span. The first fatal crash off the structure occurred near the hump, but still on the Santa Rosa side.

A friend of Mr. and Mrs. W. C. Regan, 1028 Underwood Ave., told the Pensacola News-Journal the Regans accompanied the Melvins on a mullet fishing trip to Fort Pickens Saturday. The two couples were returning from the trip in separate cars when the accident occurred.

The Melvin car passed the Regan car at the south approach to the bridge, the friend said and the Regans were behind the Melvins when the accident occurred.

Regan and his wife were suffering shock from the incident, the friend said.

Hundreds of curious motorists jammed the bridge railings for

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 1B)