

Mission Beach skydive tragedy: Fall was filmed by one of three killed

Peter Michael, Vanessa Marsh, Tom Chamberlain, The Courier-Mail October 15, 2017 12:00am

GRAPHIC video footage captured the horror of a mid-air collision and final moments of a fatal plunge of three skydivers at Mission Beach.

For a terrifying 30 seconds the trio plummeted out-of-control at speeds of up to 220km/h before they fatally crashed to earth.



Toby Turner, Kerri Pike and Peter Dawson who were killed in the incident at Mission Beach.

Police have seized one badly damaged video camera in a bid to piece together the nation's worst skydive tragedy. Experts are working to retrieve the footage shot by tandem instructor Peter Dawson during the ill-fated skydive from 14,000 feet (4572m) over the tropical tourist hamlet.

Mr Dawson, solo instructor Toby Turner and beloved mother-of-eight Kerri Pike, 54, who was on a jump for her birthday, are believed to have collided just before deploying main parachutes at 5000 feet after a 50-second free fall.



Emergency services at the scene where three bodies were found. Picture: Chris Holmes, Innisfail Advocate

Officers have been unable to locate the video camera of Mr Turner and fear it may have fallen off in the high-speed mid-air collision.

Australian Parachute Federation chief executive Brad Turner, who is co-ordinating the skydiving accident investigation, said the victims may have been knocked unconscious mid-flight

“Both the tandem and solo had parachutes open and the reserves had also deployed,” Mr Turner said.

“Hopefully, that video footage will show something to give us some clues into what went wrong.”



Kerri Pike had just celebrated her birthday. The skydive was a gift from her family.

Skydive Australia chief executive Anthony Ritter, who heads the company, said between 15,000 and 20,000 people a year, about 50 to 60 people a day, had jumped the beach “in what is considered paradise”.

“We are all hurting, and our hearts are breaking,” he said, in Mission Beach yesterday. “Can I express my deepest sympathies to everyone concerned and condolences to all the families involved. I can’t imagine the pain they are suffering right now .”

He said Mr Dawson, a veteran of more than 10,000 jumps. Mr Turner, who had worked for the company for eight years, had 7000 jumps.



Three people died in the incident at Mission Beach, south of Cairns.

Family and friends paid tribute to the tragic loss of the beloved three locals as the tight-knit Mission Beach community grappled with tragedy.

Mum Liz Dawson said: “All we can say is that our beautiful boy died doing what he loved. Our hearts are broken, but we know that every tear we shed, Peter was worth it.”

Extracted from:

<http://www.couriermail.com.au/news/queensland/video-captures-death-plunge-of-three-mission-beach-skydivers/news-story/b4d89d0751d7beec1972ddeb9b2efb>

On 15/10/17 at 12:45:31