

Mid-Air Crash Kills Two

One of two Tiger Moth training planes which collided above The Lakes golf course yesterday crashed and burst into flames, killing the occupants, an instructor and a pilot.

The other made a crash landing, and overturned. The airmen were engaged in instrument flying practice.

The two men killed were Flight-Sergeant Jack Holt, 24, married, and formerly of Albert Park, Melbourne, and Leading Aircraftman Thomas Elliott Mays Hodge, 25, single, an Englishman.

In the other plane, Pilot-Officer John Robert Cherry, 26, married, a New Zealander, suffered a lacerated forehead. His pupil, John Henry Stephen Pettett, 23, married, of Sydney, was unhurt.

The official account of the accident by R.A.A.F. Central Area Headquarters yesterday stated:—

"The two Moths took off from Mascot Aerodrome separately at about 8.15 a.m. to-day. They were engaged in instrument flying practice, and were operating independently of each other.

"At 9.5 a.m. flying at about 1150 feet over The Lakes course, they collided. The collision was practically head-on.

"The Moth in which Holt (instructor) and Hodge (pupil) were flying dived straight to the ground. Both men were killed, and the Moth was wrecked. The other aircraft made a crash landing on the golf course. It nosed over, and Pettett (pupil) escaped injury, but Cherry (instructor) suffered cuts to the forehead. The Moth was extensively damaged.

First On Spot

First to the scene of the blazing plane was Mr. J. Davenport, who conducts a refreshment kiosk on The Lakes golf course.

"The planes appeared to touch in mid-air," he said. "Then one of them began to spin away towards the ground with portion of its wing missing. The other swung in towards the course, apparently to find a landing place.

"The first plane struck the links with a terrific impact, and immediately flames shot up.

"I rushed straight to the machine to get the men away. When I arrived, I found both men dead.

"The other plane, meanwhile, had made a landing some distance away but it overturned."

Saw It Coming

Mr. Norman Tadish, of Fortescue-street, Chiswick, was drinking tea at the kiosk when he saw the two planes.

"There's going to be a head-on collision," he said to a friend. A moment later he saw the planes hit.

"The plane underneath seemed to fall to pieces after the crash, and it nose-dived," he said.

"The other machine made a landing, but turned over as it struck the links."

Rus Henson, an employee of General Motors, Pagewood, said the plane was flying at an average height above the National Studios at Pagewood, about 9 a.m., when he first noticed it. He looked up, to see the wing

R.A.A.F. PLANES CRASH.

Two Killed; Two Injured.

MID-AIR COLLISION.

When two R.A.A.F. Tiger Moth training planes collided over the Lakes Golf Course, Kingsford, early on Saturday, two men were killed. They were Sergeant Jack Holt, 24, married, formerly of Albert Park, Victoria, and Leading Aircraftman Thomas Elliott Mays Hodge, 25, single, formerly of England.

Both men were in the same machine. The occupants of the other machine were injured. They were Pilot Officer John Robert Cherry, 26, married, formerly of New Zealand, whose forehead was cut, and Leading Aircraftman John Henry Stephen Pettett, 23, married, of Sydney, who suffered bruises and shock.

An R.A.A.F. statement was that the two Moth machines took off from Mascot aerodrome at about 8.15 a.m. on Saturday for instrument flying practice, but that they were not operating together.

"At 9.5 a.m., when flying at about 1,150 feet over the Lakes golf course, they collided, and the collision was almost head-on," the statement added.

"The Moth in which Holt (instructor), and Hodge (pupil), were flying, dived straight to the ground. Both men were killed and the Moth was wrecked.

"The other aircraft made a crash landing on the golf course. It nosed over, but Pettett (pupil) escaped injury, and Cherry (instructor) suffered a cut forehead. The plane was extensively damaged.

"Sergeant Holt was educated at Ballarat High School, and Ballarat School of Mines.

"Leading Aircraftman Pettett attended Randwick Intermediate High School and enlisted last January. He was posted to Mascot from Bradfield Park last month."

CRASH LANDING.

Eye-witnesses of the tragedy said that the second plane circled round the golf course several times before Cherry and Pettett made a crash landing about 200 yards from the other plane, which was burning.

More than 1,500 people crowded on to the links when the plane crashed, and an armed guard had considerable difficulty in keeping them 100 yards away from the wrecked machines.

The first man to reach the plane was the refreshment kiosk proprietor on the course, Mr. J. Davenport. He said that the planes appeared to touch in mid-air, and then one began to spin away towards the ground with part of its wing missing.

Mr. Davenport said that he ran to the machine, but found both men dead.

7.4.41

HOLT A17-254

CHERRY A17-252

CRASH IN MID-AIR; TWO DEAD

An instructor and a pupil were killed when two R.A.A.F. Tiger Moth training aircraft collided in mid-air to-day over The Lakes golf course during instrument flying practice.

Victims were:—

Flight-Sgt. Jack Holt, 24 (married), formerly of Albert Park, Victoria.

Leading Aircraftman Thomas Elliott Mays Hodge, 25 (single), formerly of England.

They were in the same aircraft.

Occupants of the other aircraft were Pilot-Officer John Robert Cherry, 26 (married), formerly of New Zealand, who suffered lacerations to the forehead, and John Henry Stephen Pettett, 23 (married), of Sydney, who was uninjured.

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Eye-Witnesses' Stories

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SUN 5.4.41

FATAL AIR COLLISION

"In a split second I saw a plane coming towards me from slightly below, and it struck my undercarriage on the port side."

John Robert Cherry, pilot-officer, Mascot, told the City Coroner (Mr. Oram) this to-day at the inquiry into the deaths of Thomas Elliott Mays Hodge and Jack Holt, when their plane crashed at The Lakes golf links on April 5.

Hodge, an R.A.A.F. pupil, 25, was born at Shiels, Durham, England. Holt was a sergeant in the R.A.A.F. His wife lives at Ballarat.

Cherry said he had a pupil in his plane. The other machine was piloted by Holt, with Hodge as a pupil, in the rear.

The Coroner found that Hodge and Holt died from injuries accidentally received in the collision.

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PLANES COLLIDE IN MID-AIR.

Evidence at Inquest.

The City Coroner, Mr. Oram, found yesterday that Sergeant-pilot Jack Holt, 24, married, and Thomas Elliott Mays Hodge, 24, single, died from injuries they suffered when two Tiger Moth training planes collided over The Lakes Golf Links on April 5.

Sergeant-pilot Holt occupied the front cockpit of one plane and was instructing Hodge, who was in the rear cockpit. The plane had taken off from Mascot aerodrome.

Pilot-officer Norman John Lennon, stationed at Mascot, said that he was flying over the western boundary of the golf links. There was a slight drizzle of rain, but visibility was reasonably good. He saw two aircraft collide head-on. One wing was cut off one of the planes, and it crashed and burst into flames.

"The other machine rocked crazily for a few seconds," said Lennon, "and then circled round. I saw it attempt to make a landing on one of the fairways of the golf links. Immediately it touched the ground, it went on to its nose and then rolled right over on its back."

John Robert Cherry, pilot-officer, said that at about 9 a.m. his plane came into collision with one piloted by Sergeant Holt.

"I carried out a crash landing about 200 yards from where the other plane was burning," he said. "I ran over to do what I could, but nothing could be done."

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