

lanes Damaged In Storm

LEETON, Friday.

A number of Tiger Moth training aeroplanes were damaged this afternoon in a storm which swept over Narrandera Elementary Flying Training School.

The wind lifted the light planes bodily. Some were overturned while others were driven against a fence.

When the storm struck the planes were moored on the tarmac, but they were blown like kites over the field.

The concrete blocks holding the mooring lines were torn from the ground.

One trainee pilot was in a plane that was about to commence a flight when the machine was lifted and overturned. He suffered a broken arm.

Another airman attempted to hold a plane, and was lifted into the air to 30 feet. When he released his grip he fell to the ground and suffered a broken wrist.

New School

The elementary school has been established only a few months.

It was announced only last week that £79,000 had been spent on the aerodrome.

A number of the machines were imported from Britain, others were Australian-made.

The aerodrome is only a short distance from the Murrumbidgee River, the course of which windstorms usually follow.

A 10,000-gallon petrol tank was rolled along the aerodrome by the wind, and struck the side of a hut. Members of the school guard were thrown out of their bunks.

Two huts were blown from their foundations and a fire tender shed was wrecked. Other buildings were also damaged.

Roofs Blown Away

Roofs were blown off stables and poultry sheds, and 103 points of rain fell in 15 minutes, when a cyclonic storm struck the Government Experiment Farm at Wagga.

A 60-mile-an-hour gale lifted the whole of the balcony off the Royal Hotel at Mirrool and carried it two blocks on to the roof of Fisher's general store.

DAILY TELEGRAPH (SYDNEY)
7.12.40

PLANES DAMAGED IN CYCLONE.

AIR SCHOOL HAVOC.

Trainees Injured.

A cyclone which struck No. 8 Elementary Flying Training School at Narrandera yesterday tore light training planes from their ground pegs, and damaged several of them, while men who were trying to hold them down were thrown into the air and injured.

The cyclone tore along the Leeton Road, levelling trees, fences, and buildings in its path. A number of men living opposite the aerodrome tried to cross the road to help the ground crews, but were unable to progress against the wind.

Some machines overturned; others bumped into fences. A trainee was about to take off in a plane when the wind caught it, and it turned over. He broke his arm. Another man was holding on to a plane when it was lifted into the air. He dropped from a height of 30 feet, and sprained his wrist.

A 10,000-gallon petrol tank was carried away and hit a hut occupied by several trainees. They were thrown out of their bunks. Machine-gun pillboxes round the aerodrome were damaged. Sections of hangars lying on the aerodrome awaiting erection were blown about like pieces of straw. Large pine trees nearby were uprooted.

All the damage was done in five minutes. During the cyclone, hail fell.

AIRCRAFT TO BE REPLACED.

CANBERRA, Friday.

The Air Board announced later that the wind passed through a line of light training planes, all of which were pegged down. Several of the machines were extensively damaged, and the surface of the aerodrome was affected.

The board added that the R.A.A.F. had arranged to replace the damaged aircraft as soon as the surface damage was repaired.

The Minister for Air, Mr. McEwen, said to-night that reports that before the hurricane there was a possibility of abandoning Narrandera as a flying training centre were unfounded.

"As at many of our aerodromes and training schools, the surface at Narrandera has been affected by the extraordinary dry season," he said. "Some extension of runways has consequently been provided for. No question of abandoning this site has ever arisen."

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SYDNEY MORNING HERALD
7.12.40