

AIR CRASH AT CANBERRA.

MAN KILLED.

PLANES COLLIDE.

LORD GOWRIE AND MR. FADDEN ON SCENE.

CANBERRA, Friday.

When two R.A.A.F. planes collided and crashed near Government House, Canberra, this afternoon, both pilots (one of whom was flying solo) parachuted to safety, but Corporal William Barry Ramsay, 36, married, of Redfern, crashed with his machine and was killed.

In Government House, the Governor-General, Lord Gowrie, the Acting Prime Minister, Mr. Fadden, and the Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief-Marshal Sir Charles Burnett, heard the crash and ran to the wrecked planes.

The pilots, who were admitted to the R.A.A.F. hospital with shock, were Flying-Officer Barry Mortimer Cox, 25, married, of Reid, A.C.T., and Pilot-Officer Alan Rupert Baster, 24, married, of Braddon, A.C.T.

Officially announcing the crash to-night, R.A.A.F. Central Headquarters stated that about 5.5 p.m. Pilot-Officer Baster, flying solo, took off from Canberra aerodrome and flew westward into the sun. Still climbing, he apparently lost sight of three aircraft which were returning from Narrandera. About 2,000 feet above Red Hill, near Government House, his plane collided with the plane on the left-hand side of the formation, which was flown by Flying-Officer Cox, with Corporal Ramsay crew. Baster and Cox left their aircraft by parachute, but Corporal Ramsay was either pinned in by the crash or knocked unconscious.

Lord Gowrie, Mr. Fadden, and Sir Charles Burnett were at Government House when the collision occurred. Just after they heard the crash, Captain L. S. Bracegirdle, military secretary to the Governor-General, ran into the room and said that two aircraft had collided almost overhead.

PILOT TAKEN TO YARRALUMLA.

Lord Gowrie and Mr. Fadden ran several hundred yards to one plane, which had crashed near a woolshed.

As they arrived, Pilot-Officer Baster landed nearby. He was rushed to Government House in a utility truck.

Sir Charles Burnett ran to where the other plane had crashed, in a pine forest. He found Corporal Ramsay dead in the machine. Flying-Officer Cox had landed not far away.

Corporal Ramsay was born at Cessnock. He was a motor driver before he joined the permanent Air Force as a fabric worker in June, 1937. He served at Richmond before being posted to other squadrons.

Flying-Officer Cox was a share broker's clerk before he joined the service in February last year. He went to Cranbrook School and Sydney Grammar School. He was well known as the skipper of a 28-footer which raced in Sydney Harbour and in ocean events.

Pilot-Officer Baster was a proof-reader on the Melbourne "Argus" before he joined the Air Force last April. He attended Box Hill High School, Victoria.

SYDNEY MORNING HERALD

5-4-41

PLANE COLLISION DEATH.

Sun in Pilot's Eyes.

CORONER'S FINDINGS POSTPONED.

CANBERRA, Tuesday.

The Canberra coroner, Lieutenant-Colonel J. T. Goodwin, postponed his finding at the inquiry to-day into the death of Corporal William Barry Ramsay, 36, who was killed when two R.A.A.F. planes collided and crashed over Government House, Canberra, on April 4. The inquiry was adjourned to a date to be fixed.

Lieutenant-Colonel Goodwin said he desired to see the evidence tendered to the Air Force inquiry, as well as the findings of that inquiry.

"I am not competent to say on the evidence whether there was any deliberate contravention of regulations governing flights," he said. "There must be some regulations governing flights at different levels, and I want to hear evidence on that point."

Police witnesses said that when Ramsay's body was found near the wreckage of the plane in which he was a passenger, his parachute was open and part of it was tangled in the wreckage.

"TERRIFIC CRASH."

Flying-Officer Barry M. Cox, who had Ramsay with him in one of the planes, said that he was flying in formation at about 2,000 feet when the collision occurred.

"I did not see anything before the collision," he said. "There was just a terrific crash when the other plane collided with me. I fell forward and hit my head on something, and then I found that the plane was spinning to the ground without one wing. I said, 'We'd better get out of here.' I opened the slide and fell out. I did not jump."

Pilot-Officer Alan R. Baster said that he was flying solo in a south-westerly direction when the planes collided. Because of the sun in his eyes he was unable to see the three planes in formation. After the collision his machine began to spin, and he could not correct it, so he baled out.

SYDNEY MORNING HERALD

16-4-41

A20-105

A20-171

Parachute Part Open

CANBERRA, Tuesday.

Evidence that a member of the R.A.A.F. had died with a partly opened parachute attached to him was given at an inquest here today.

The parachute tangled in the wreckage of a plane that crashed near Government House, Canberra, on April 4, after colliding in mid-air with another R.A.A.F. machine.

Two other airmen parachuted to safety.

Today's inquest was on Corporal William Barry Ramsay, who was killed in the crash.

Flying-Officer Barry M. Cox said that he was flying in formation with two other planes at 2000 feet.

"I had Ramsay as a passenger," he said. "I didn't see the other plane. I only heard the terrific crash.

"I fell forward and hit my head on something. I realised that the machine was spinning without a wing.

"I called out 'We had better get out of here.' Then I opened the hood and half fell out. I didn't see Ramsay."

Sun Glare

Pilot-Officer Alan R. Baster said he was flying solo, and because of the sun could not see the other planes.

"The first thing I knew was when the collision occurred," he said.

"After the collision my machine started to spin. I couldn't stop it so I baled out."

James Oldfield, an employee of the Department of the Interior, said he saw the wing of the single plane touch the wing of the outside plane in the formation of three.

He ran to where the plane in which Ramsay was a passenger had crashed.

"The plane was burning. There was a body a few feet away with a partly opened parachute attached to it," he said.

Police Satisfied

Sergeant Bally, who assisted the Coroner (Lieut.-Col. Goodwin), said he was satisfied the parachute was in order, but that Ramsay had not been able to get clear of the falling plane.

Lieut.-Col. Goodwin adjourned the inquest until he had seen the results of the Air Force inquiry into the collision.

"I am not competent to say on the evidence whether there was any deliberate contravention of the regulations governing flights," he said.

Fatal Mid-Air Collision Of Camouflaged Planes Described

From Our Special Representative

CANBERRA, Thursday.—The Canberra air collision on May 4 in which Corporal Barry Ramsay, 36, was killed, was described by the Coroner (Colonel Goodwin) today as having been caused by a set of circumstances which might not occur again in a lifetime.

There was no evidence of negligence by anyone, he said. A finding of accidental death was recorded.

Ramsay jumped when the plane in which he was travelling collided with another, but, according to earlier evidence by Squadron Leader Creswell, it appeared that he did not pull the ripcord of his parachute in time.

Ramsay was in a plane with Pilot-Officer Baster when it collided with a second plane which was part of a formation of three, headed by Flying Officer Evans with Pilot Officer Park on the right and Pilot Officer Cox on the left.

Evidence was given today that all the planes were camouflaged to blend into the sky and bright sunshine made

miles an hour when suddenly, flying at the same altitude and coming straight toward him, he saw another plane only about 150 yards away.

"I immediately pushed the controls hard to the left and backwards, but within a second I heard the oncoming plane collide with another plane about 30ft. away from me," he said.

Pilot Officer Baster said that at the time of the impact he was travelling at 150 miles an hour and because of the sunshine did not see the oncoming plane until he actually collided with it.

HERALD P.3 THURS

1.5.41

DAILY TELEGRAPH (SYDNEY)

16.4.41