

One killed, three leap to safety in plane collision

MELBOURNE, Saturday.—A leading-aircraftman was killed and three others made amazing parachute jumps to safety today when two R.A.A.F. planes collided in mid-air 2000 feet over the You Yangs hills, near Geelong, at 8.30 this morning.

Two escaped from one damaged plane by overturning it in the air so that they could fall out.

The parachute of one did not open for more than 1000 feet, and he landed only a few yards from one fiercely blazing plane.

The men were:—

KILLED. — Leading-Aircraftman Halcombe George Brock, 23, single, of Semaphore, South Australia.

SLIGHTLY INJURED. — Leading-Aircraftman Morris McGuire, 22, single, of North Caulfield; Leading-Aircraftman Colin Fallon, 23, single of North Adelaide; Leading-Aircraftman John Distin Hill, 22, single, of West Beach, South Australia.

The planes were flying with a third plane in formation practice over sparsely settled country.

Only eye-witness of the collision was Mr. George Lowe, of Melbourne Station.

"I was on horseback, looking for some sheep," Mr. Lowe said tonight. "I heard the planes, and saw them very high overhead.

"I heard a loud, tearing sound.

"I saw two of the planes bang together, and as I looked they fell apart.

"They're gone," I said. Both planes hurtled towards the earth.

"I did not see the men jump out, but seconds after the collision I saw two parachutes open.

Fell 1000 Feet

"The third parachute did not open for a long time, and the man must have fallen 1000 feet.

"I spurred my horse and galloped to where they were falling.

"The planes crashed almost simultaneously about a quarter of a mile apart.

"One blew up with a terrific explosion.

"As I arrived at the spot two parachutists landed close together.

"One parachute became caught in the wind and bowled him over and over for about 20 yards, and he was freed by the first parachutist.

"They dashed to the blazing plane nearby, and a few seconds later I saw them come out of the black smoke helping the other man, whose parachute had not opened for some time. He couldn't walk.

"I said, 'Are you all out?' One of

them said, 'No, there's another one. We don't think he got out.'

"We found Brock's body in the plane which had not exploded.

"His parachute was on his back and his hand grasped the rip cord.

"The third plane went back to Laverton and presently returned with a bomber.

"The bomber landed nearby with doctors and stretchers, and took the three airmen on board."

Little was left of the two planes. One was almost wholly buried in the earth.

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