

R.A.A.F. trainees die in crash

A R.A.A.F. cadet pilot and his radio mechanic were killed when a Wirraway trainer crashed near Junee, in the Riverina, yesterday.

The dead men had previously been stationed at Point Cook, but neither was a Victorian.

Their names had not been released by the R.A.A.F. late last night.

Another pilot who was flying in the same detachment saw the pilot of the limping plane struggle desperately with the controls before it took its final dive from several thousand feet.

It burst into flames when it hit the ground.

Would-be rescuers who raced to the scene were driven back by the intense heat.

The four-plane flight had taken off from Uranquinty, near Wagga, where the men were in a final operational camp before graduation in December.

A senior R.A.A.F. officer of the Flying Safety Authority flew from Point Cook to the scene of the crash for on-the-spot investigations late yesterday.

5.11.57

RAAF Crash Victims Named

The two men killed when an R.A.A.F. Wirraway trainer crashed on Monday near Junee, New South Wales, were:

Senior Cadet Peter A. Vear, 21, the pilot, a Royal New Zealand Air Force cadet who was due to graduate from the R.A.A.F. College, Point Cook, in December.

Leading Aircraftsman L. L. McLachlin, an R.A.A.F. ground crew member of Laurieton, New South Wales.

Senior Cadet Vear was the son of Wing Commander N. A. Vear, an R.N.Z.A.F. engineering officer based at Ohakea.

6.11.57

Two Killed in R.A.A.F. Crash

JUNEE, Monday. — An R.A.A.F. cadet pilot fought to regain control of his pitching Wirraway for more than a minute before it plunged to the earth, killing him and his radio operator near Junee this morning.

Their names have not yet been released.

The plane had taken off from Uranquinty, near Wagga, and was taking part in a final exercise before the men were due to graduate in December.

They had earlier been stationed at Point Cook, Victoria.

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Air tragedy remembered by small gathering

The thoughts of a small gathering in a wind swept field near Junee yesterday turned back two years to an air tragedy in the same field.

In the field on November 4, 1957, R.N.Z.A.F. cadet Peter Vear and L.A.C. Laird McLachlan, R.A.A.F. were killed when a Wirraway crashed during training exercises.

Yesterday, at about the time the accident happened in 1957, a memorial plaque to the two airmen was unveiled in the presence of the parents of one of the dead airmen.

The unveiling of the memorial by Flt. Lt. Bruce Taylor, R.A.A.F., and the dedication by Canon G. A. M. Nell of Junee was watched by Mr. and Mrs. D. J. McLachlan.

The granite-mounted plaque is at the foot of a Kurrajong tree which forms part of the memorial.

The tree was planted in the field at "Millbank," near Junee where the plane crashed, by the property owners (Messrs. J., R., A. W. and K. Hill) and an adjoining land holder, Mr. H. W. Storey of "Karewah."

It was planted as the result of a chance remark by Laird McLachlan's mother that it would be fitting if a tree was planted at the scene of the accident.

The tree has been cared for by the property owners who also erected a permanent tree guard around the memorial.

At 11.00 a.m. yesterday, an R.A.A.F. armed party under Warrant Officer E. Silver marched into positions

around the memorial and stood with reversed arms while Canon Nell read prayers for the dead airmen.

The Officer in Charge of the Air Force (Flt. Lt. B. Taylor) unveiled the memorial and after Canon Nell had dedicated it, Bugler, Warrant Officer H. Gregg, sounded the "Last Post."

Mr. and Mrs. McLachlan came from Northaven for yesterday's ceremony.

Saw crash

Flt. Lt. Taylor read a telegram from Peter Vear's parents who live in New Zealand.

The telegram was sent from Talere and read: Our loving thoughts with you at this time.

Mr. Storey, who was present at the ceremony yesterday, saw the plane crash.

He said yesterday it was one of five Wirraways taking part in exercises.

The two young airmen who lost their lives were from the R.A.A.F. Station at Pt Cook, Victoria. They were taking part in final training exercises from Forest Hill.

Mr. and Mrs. McLachlan said yesterday they were very grateful to the Hill brothers and Mr. Storey for caring for the tree and placing the guard over it.

They also personally thanked Canon Nell and members of the Air Force party for their attendance yesterday.