

# TWO KILLED IN DIVE

3-30-43

## Bomber Crash

TWO R.A.A.F. officers were killed on Saturday when a Vultee-Vengeance dive-bomber crashed from 800ft. at a speed of nearly 300 miles an hour, following a display dive for the A.R.P. demonstration at Flemington racecourse. They were:—

**Flight Lieutenant Richard Henry Roe**, 26, pilot, formerly of Benalla.

**Pilot Officer James Noel Harris**, 25, Clifton Hill.

Before enlisting in the R.A.A.F. in September, 1940, Roe was a clerk, and Harris, who enlisted in August, 1940, was a salesman.

The plane, which was to bring tragic reality to the scene, was giving the first aerial display of the afternoon—dive-bombing the waste area in the centre of the course. While about 60,000 people on the course and surrounding hills looked on, it came in from Footscray with the sun behind it, in a shallow dive. It levelled off safely at 800 to 1000 ft. as a pre-arranged ground explosion took place.

### Crowd Sees Flames

ALMOST immediately, possibly in the beginning of a victory roll, the machine turned on its back, then dived straight into a grain store belonging to the Victorian Wheat-growers' Corporation, in Macaulay-rd., North Melbourne. For a moment there was hope that it had merely disappeared behind the hill, but a huge mushroom of black smoke and flames told a story which stunned the gathering.

The crash was about two miles from the bombing area. Tearing through the iron roof of the store into bags of produce and through a brick wall, the bomber was reduced to fragments, which hundreds of spectators began to gather as souvenirs. Yesterday police reinforcements had to be sent to clear the area of crowds.

The Governor (Sir Winston Dugan) and many high military, naval and Air Force officers saw the accident.

Fire headquarters received a call within seconds from the Fire Chief (Mr. Kemp), who was at the course and used the radio equipment recently installed on fire wagons. Brigades took more than two hours to extinguish the blaze in the factory.

The area is thickly populated and the crashing machine passed within a few feet of the Macaulay railway station, where a fairly crowded train was standing.

6.9.43 CRASHED 4.9.43.

# DEATH DIVE IN PLANE

MELBOURNE, Friday.—"Disobeyance of orders" was suggested by an Air Force officer at the inquest today on two airmen killed in a crash on September 4.

Watched by 60,000 people the plane crashed near the Macaulay railway station during an ARP demonstration at Flemington racecourse.

Pilot-Officer James Noel Harris (25), of Clifton Hill (wireless air gunner), and F/Lieut. Richard Henry Roe (26), of Benalla (pilot), were killed.

The commanding officer of the Production Test and Ferry Flight, Squadron-Leader G. W. Savage, said that after the plane—a new Vultee Vengeance—had carried out a dive-bombing display over the racecourse, it dived twice, followed each time by a slow roll.

It failed to come out of the second dive. Inverted, it ceased rolling, and continued flying at high speed, losing height until it crashed.

"The pilot made the roll off his own bat, and I think it would be considered disobeyance of orders," S/Ldr. Savage added.

Constable Leslie Harley said the plane flew on its back for a mile and a half before crashing.

The Coroner (Mr. Tingate, PM) found that the occupants died from injuries received when the plane got out of control, struck a building and caught fire.

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