

# R.A.A.F. plane hits ship's mast, crashes in flames

SUNDAY TELEGRAPH 23.7.44

**BRISBANE, Sat.**—Two R.A.A.F. men were killed this morning at Hamilton when their plane hit the mast of a berthed ship and crashed in flames.

The men were practising dive-bombing when their plane hit the mast.

Hundreds of people saw the crash.

The plane, a single-engined, high-powered dive-bomber, had completed exercises over Brisbane River. It approached the ship—a naval vessel—and failed to rise.

It struck the crow's nest on the mast,

tearing off some of the fuselage.

The plane was seen to hurtle over wool sheds near the wharf, spin low for 50 yards, and crash in salt pans nearby. Some eye-witnesses thought it was a light before it hit the ground.

Firemen fought for an hour to put out the fire, but the plane was destroyed.

Firemen recovered one body from the wreckage. The other body was thrown clear when the plane crashed.

Both the men killed came from other States.

The crow's nest was the only part of the ship damaged

## TWO AIRMEN DIE IN CRASH

### PLANE STRUCK MAST

**BRISBANE, Sunday.**—Two R.A.A.F. men were killed in dive-bombing practice yesterday when their plane struck the mast of a ship in the Brisbane River.

The ship was berthed at the Hamilton Cold Stores wharf, and the plane crashed into an open area behind the stores.

Part of the engine fell on the roof of the stores and the plane crashed to earth. One of the occupants was thrown from the plane by the impact and landed 350 feet away.

Hamilton fire brigade was on the scene within two minutes, but the plane was by then a red-hot inferno. The body of the other man was recovered from the wreckage before the fire was extinguished.

SYDNEY MORNING HERALD

24.7.44

# Plane Hit Ship, 2 Killed

**BRISBANE, Saturday.**—Hundreds of people at Hamilton this morning saw a plane hit the mast of a berthed ship when practising dive-bombing, and crash in flames in salt pans nearby.

Two RAAF men in the plane, whose homes are in other States, were killed.

Firemen fought for an hour to quell the flames but the plane was destroyed.

One body was recovered from the burning wreckage. The other was thrown clear when the machine crashed.

The plane, a high-powered dive-bomber, had completed a few exercises over the river and was approaching the ship when it failed to rise from a dive and struck the crow's nest.

Scarcely any damage was caused to the ship.

# Men Killed When 'Plane Hits Ship's Mast

1945

## TERRIFIC DEATH DIVE, FIRE

• AIRMEN •  
DEAD IN CRASH

### Tragedy At Hamilton

Two members of the R.A.A.F. were killed instantly yesterday when their machine crashed at Eagle Farm, three miles from the city, after striking the mast of a ship. Hundreds of residents of Hamilton and Ascot, who had been watching the 'plane practising dive bombing and strafing runs over ships in the river, saw the crash.

Ambulance cars and fire reels were sent to the crash scene between Harbor-road and the wharves at Hamilton.

THE force with which the machine crashed killed both occupants. One man was thrown clear of the wreckage, which was strewn over a distance of 100 yards. Remains of the other airman were recovered by men after they had extinguished a blaze which broke out immediately after the crash.

Witnesses stated that they had been ejected out of doors by the 'plane's engine as the machine dived towards the earth at

made a number of loops.

on



Smoking ruins of the plane in which two R.A.A.F. men lost their lives when the machine crashed at Eagle Farm yesterday. Prior to crash, the 'plane hit the mast of a ship, during dive-bombing practice.

# 2 Airmen Killed When 'Plane

## TERRIFIC DEATH D Tragedy At Hamilton

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### TWO KILLED WHEN PLANE HITS SHIP

VULTURE VENGEANCE

Hundreds at Hamilton this morning saw a single-engine plane hit the mast of a berthed vessel when practising dive-bombing and crash in flames on the salt pans off Harbour Road.

The two occupants, both RAAF men whose homes are in other States of the Commonwealth, were killed.

Hamilton firemen fought for an hour to quell the flames; but the plane was destroyed. The firemen, however, recovered one body from the burning wreckage, the other being thrown clear when the machine crashed.

The machine, a high-powered dive-bomber, had completed a few exercises down the middle of the river, and approaching the berthed vessel failed to rise from a dive and struck the crow's nest.

Some of the fuselage was carried away and the large plane was seen to hurtle over the

wool sheds near the lower wharf, spin low for about 500 yards and crash.

Some eye-witnesses thought it was alight before it hit the ground.

City ambulances were rushed to the scene, and six men of a fire reel from Hamilton dragged 300 ft. of hose from roadway water plugs to fight the fiercely blazing plane.

At first the firemen could not discover if any one was in the wreck, but as they got the blaze somewhat under control they entered the wreckage and rescued one body.

Hardly any damage was caused to the vessel, a naval craft, the crow's nest being merely forced slightly out of line near the top of the mast.

1945

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Witnesses stated that they had been ejected out of doors by the plane's engine as the plane fell towards the earth at

made a number

level.

on

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

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DEPARTMENT OF CIVIL AVIATION,  
THE KINGSFORD-SMITH AERODROME,  
P.O. BOX 41 MASCOT, N.S.W

TELEPHONE: MU 1585-6-7-8

TELEGRAPHIC ADDRESS: AVIAT. SYDNEY.

IN REPLY QUOTE 14/3.

4061

RECEIVED  
 27th July, 1944  
 CIVIL AVIATION

MEMORANDUM FOR:

Director-General of Civil Aviation:

HAMILTON FLYING BOAT BASE - R.A.A.F. ACCIDENT  
22. 7. 1944.

I forward herewith copy of report dated 24th July (which has probably already been sent you by Archerfield) from the Control Officer at Hamilton Base in regard to a fatal accident to a R.A.A.F. aircraft close to Hamilton Base on the 22nd July, 1944.

2. It is suggested that it be reported to Air Board that dive-bombing in the vicinity of our bases is most undesirable.

*P.C. 31-7-44. HLA*  
*CVF 31-7-44 HLA*

District Superintendent.

*This matter has been the subject of a very strong Complaint by Premier of Queensland to Prime Minister and is being followed up by R.A.A.F. from the general aspect of low flying as well as the investigation of the accident*

*nfa Pa In 1/8/44 HLA*

C O P Y.

M2646

Hamilton,  
24th July, 1944.

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WDFS/mm

MEMORANDUM FOR:

The Officer-in-Charge,  
Department of Civil Aviation,  
ARCHERFIELD AERODROME.

PRACTISE DIVE-BOMBING  
IN THE VICINITY OF THE FLYING BOAT BASE.

At approximately 11:05 on Saturday, the 22nd July, a R.A.A.F. "VULTEE VENGEANCE", number believed to be A27/535, while practising dive bombing on a United States Navy Vessel, the K.A.S., which was moored alongside the wharf situated about one hundred (100) yards to the west of the main office of the Flying Boat Base. The plane while pulling out of a dive struck the crow's nest of a vessel along side the K.A.S., straightened out and went into a shallow dive, at this juncture it was seen that pieces of the plane were scattered in all directions, one piece falling in the main gate of the Flying Boat Base.

The plane then proceeded in its dive, cleared the wool sheds and crashed into the back of the Base, and then caught fire.

The pilot was thrown clear of the plane and landed in the mangroves, but the observer was wedged in the plane and not until the fire was extinguished was he found, badly burnt.

The accident was viewed by the Qantas Empire Airways Passengers, which will be appreciated had a bad effect upon their nerves.

This matter of dive-bombing in the vicinity of the Flying Boat Base is viewed with grave concern, and it would be appreciated if action can be taken to stop this practice in the future.

(W.D.F. STOW)  
Control Officer.

Copy to: The District Superintendent,  
Mascot.