

Pilot And Navigator Killed At Stratford

Mosquito Aircraft Crashes into Paddock

An aircraft from East Sale crashed into a paddock at Stratford on Tuesday afternoon and the two occupants were killed. This is the first fatal accident involving aircraft from East Sale since a plane and its crew were lost off the Ninety-Mile Beach some years ago. During the war years there were several crashes which involved loss of life, but since 1946 the station has maintained a remarkably good record. When it is taken into account that aircraft from the station flew 13,500 hours last year and totals slightly less the two previous years, it will be realised that maintenance of aircraft in the best condition possible has been a by-word of the R.A.A.F.

CRASH AT STRATFORD

At about 2.30 p.m. on Tuesday the crash occurred about three miles north-east of Stratford, on a property owned by Mr. James Stewart. The alarm was given and the rescue crews from East Sale with a medical unit was rushed to the scene.

It was found that the two occupants had been killed in the crash.

The victims were:—

Flight Lieut. William F. Wilson, of Elgin street, Sale, married.

Warrant Officer George I. Wilson, of Oakleigh, single.

Mr. J. Stewart, who was working on a truck about 14 miles away, said that he saw the plane flying around a few minutes before the crash. It appeared to be quite all right. He was unloading the truck when he heard the explosion and felt a blast of wind. He looked up and saw a cloud of smoke.

The wreckage was strewn over about 10 acres of ground. The smoke and flames from the explosion leaped high into the air. It appeared to be a bluish flash. The dry grass in the vicinity caught fire from the smouldering wreckage.

DIVE INTO GROUND

Mr. J. Lyell, of Stratford, said that he saw the plane prior to the accident. It appeared to dive towards the ground and a rising section of land. There was a terrific explosion and the impact caused a sudden rush of air. The engine of the plane tore a great hole in the ground and the fuselage was spread over

ALARM GIVEN

Mrs. Cooper, whose husband works on the property for Mr. Stewart, saw the crash and telephoned the R.A.A.F. authorities at East Sale.

The men in the locality guarded the aircraft and the surroundings in case of fire until the R.A.A.F. units arrived shortly after.

The scene of the accident was about 14 miles from Sale and three miles from Stratford.

Flight Lieut. Wilson was an instructor at East Sale. He has been stationed there for some time and had a distinguished record as a pilot and instructor. At the time of the accident he and Warrant Officer Wilson (no relation) were on a conversion course which demands more than ordinary flying instruction.

The funeral of the late Flight Lieut. Wilson will take place after a service at the Presbyterian Church commencing at 10 a.m. tomorrow. The cortege will then travel to the Sale Cemetery.

Warrant Officer Wilson will be buried in Melbourne.

GIPPSLAND PAPER

CRASHED 11.3.52

TWO DIE IN AIR CRASH

TWO R.A.A.F. airmen, both named Wilson, were killed yesterday when a Mosquito fighter-bomber crashed into rising ground at Stratford, near Sale.

Eye-witnesses said the plane did not right itself quickly enough after coming out of a spiral dive.

The dead men are: Flight-Lieutenant W. F. Wilson, married, of Elgin st., Sale, and Warrant Officer G. I. Wilson, of Oakleigh.

Flight-Lieut. Wilson was Mosquito flight instructor at East Sale R.A.A.F. station. He was on an instructional flight with W.O. Wilson.

A special R.A.A.F. inquiry into the crash will be opened today.

A bluish flame leapt 200 feet in the air after yesterday's crash.

The explosion rocked buildings half a mile away, and was heard for four miles.

Dug 6ft. hole

The plane dug a 6ft. hole in the ground. Pieces were scattered over 200 yards, and the two engines, weighing a ton each, were hurled 40 yards.

Mr. J. Lyle, a Stratford farmer, said he saw the plane complete two spiral dives and come out of a third. Then it "seemed to get off balance and disappear into the side of a rise in the ground."

MELBOURNE PAPER

Two pilots killed: crash in forest

TWO R.A.A.F. pilots were killed yesterday when their Mosquito plane crashed in rugged timber-country four miles north of Stratford, in Gippsland.

They were: Flt.-Lieut. William F. Wilson, of Elgin-st., Sale; and Warrant-Officer G. I. Wilson, of Oakleigh.

The plane exploded when it crashed on Mr. James Stewart's property at 2.36 p.m. Wreckage trailed for 400 yds.

Both men were stationed at the East Sale aerodrome.

MELBOURNE PAPER