

# DEATH CRASH IN RAAF PLANE



● WRECKAGE of the Dakota strewn over a wide area of the East Sale RAAF aerodrome today.



# Airman grabs Dakota at Sale base

*Herald Staff Reporter*

**SAFE, Today.**—A young engine mechanic with a yearning to fly grabbed a two-engine Dakota plane and took off in the darkness at the RAAF's East Sale aerodrome today.

He flew two miles, crashed, and was killed in the exploding wreckage.

He had never learnt to fly, but he somehow got the aircraft off the airstrip.

## Half-circled back

The plane half-circled in the darkness and roared back towards the air force station, where hundreds of servicemen with their families were asleep.

But before the plane reached the buildings—with the mechanic revving the engines at full power in an attempt to rise—the port (left) wing hit the ground.

The dead man is Aircraftsman Harold V. Pocock, of Sydney. He was employed in the engine maintenance squadron.

## Slipped past guard

Only chance, or a detailed knowledge of the movements of the guards, allowed Pocock to get away with the plane.

It was parked with several other Dakotas on the edge of the airstrip, and the planes were inspected regularly through the night.

*Before he took off, Pocock had to:—*

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Untie three ropes securing the parked Dakota to big concrete blocks on the tarmac;

Remove the chocks beneath the wheels and in the controls;

Start the big aircraft's two engines—the aircraft had self-starters;

Taxi about 30 yards in pitch darkness and rain to the main runway;

Take off at 90 miles an hour on a runway which was unmarked by the usual flare path.

## Roar awoke sleeping men

Here is the sequence of events at the aerodrome:

The station had closed