

AEROPLANE TRAGEDY.

AN INSTRUCTOR KILLED.

Pupil Slightly Injured.

Melbourne, March 25.

A few minutes after 9.30 this morning an Avro aeroplane crashed at the Point Cook Flying School from a height stated to have been about 200ft., and dashed to death one of its occupants, Flying Officer Stewart E. Mailer, Cadet Officer A. M. Charlesworth, aged 21, who was controlling the machine at the time of the crash, escaped with only minor injuries. Mailer's injuries were found to be a fractured skull, arm, and leg, together with internal injuries. His more fortunate companion sustained only a few abrasions in addition to a severe shock.

The two officers left the hangar with the machine shortly after 9.15, and went aloft for instructional purposes, Charlesworth, as the pupil, having control of it. The machine, which had been in the air earlier in the morning, behaved well, and went through a number of manoeuvres without difficulty. They had begun to descend when the aeroplane suddenly nose-dived, and, getting out of control pitched into a paddock adjacent to the hangar. The noise of the crash brought mechanics and officers running from all parts of the establishment. They found the machine, with the wings broken off, lying tail up. The under carriage had been completely carried away. Mailer was underneath the machine, and was dead when picked up. Charlesworth, who was dazed, had a remarkable escape from death. He was hurried to Melbourne after receiving medical attention, and was admitted to the Caulfield Military Hospital. The accident appeared to happen within a couple of seconds. There were few eye-witnesses.

Mailer, who was regarded as one of the most popular and efficient officers at Point Cook, had only joined the R.A.A.F. in November of last year, and had been engaged on instructional work at Point Cook only a few months. He belonged originally to Sydney, where he was educated at the Sydney Grammar School. He was in England at the outbreak of the war, and, after procuring a commission in the infantry, transferred to the R.F.C. He graduated as a pilot. He was awarded the Air Force Cross, and also held the Gosport certificate of instruction. He was 33 years of age, and was only recently married.

Immediately after the accident the first member of the Air Board (Flight Commander R. Williams) directed that an inquiry should be held, and the board presided over by Squadron Leader H. N. Wrigley, sat at Point Cook all day. The report and finding will be sent to the Minister. The few persons who saw the crash doubt whether the inquiry will disclose much more than is already known.

This is the second fatal accident at the school since it was established in 1911. Leading Aircraftsman Wricker was killed there three years ago. It is the first fatality since the Air Board took control.

A3-28 Avro 504 crash March 25 1925 at Point Cook, killing instructor Pilot Officer Stewart E Mailer and injuring Cadet Officer A M Charlesworth, enquiry ordered by Flight Commander R Williams to be presided over by Squadron Leader H N Wrigley, the second fatal accident at Point Cook since its establishment in 1911.