

AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION SUMMARY REPORT

AS 741-1022

Publication of this report is authorised by the Director General of Civil Aviation under the provisions of Air Navigation Regulations 1981

1. LOCATION OF OCCURRENCE

Five miles south-east of Beaudesert, Queensland	Height a.m.s.l. 200 feet	Date 25.4.74	Time (Local) 1045 hours	Zone EST
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2. THE AIRCRAFT

Make and Model Cessna 185C	Registration VH-DJU
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3. CONCLUSIONS

- (i) At approximately 1045 hours EST on 25 April, 1974 a parachutist was fatally injured on impact with the ground following a free fall descent near Beaudesert, Queensland.
- (ii) The parachutist, Dumer Gozzi, aged 28 years, had completed 20 descents as a student parachutist with the Ramblers Parachute Centre. His log book indicated that, prior to commencing training with the Ramblers Parachute Centre, he had completed 89 static line descents as a paratrooper in the Italian army.
- (iii) The training of Mr. Gozzi had progressed to the stage where he had completed stage 4 of the Descent Training Syllabus listed in Appendix 2 of Air Navigation Orders Section 29.1, and he was progressing towards completion of stage 5 of this Syllabus.
- (iv) Mr. Gozzi was equipped with a back-mounted, 28 feet diameter, modified C9 main parachute and a 24 feet diameter, chest-mounted, reserve parachute, each manually operated by means of a ripcord. He was also equipped with an altimeter, positioned on his chest, as required for delayed opening descents in excess of 10 seconds.
- (v) The main parachute had been packed by Mr. Gozzi, under supervision, and the reserve parachute had been packed by David McEvoy, the Manager of the Ramblers Parachute Centre and a qualified parachute packer.
- (vi) At the time of the accident the weather was fine, there were 3/8 of cumulus cloud based at about 1000 feet, the visibility was 37 kilometres and the wind velocity at ground level was easterly at 5 knots.
- (vii) The descent on which the accident occurred was from a Cessna 185C aircraft, registered VH-DJU, which was flown by Keith Desmond Hohenhaus, who was the holder of a valid private pilot licence. The holder of the Certificate of Registration for the aircraft was W. T. Appleton. Also on board the aircraft were parachutists Linda Jean Wilkinson, Joseph Norman Armstrong, Robert Paul Stewart and parachute instructor Russell John Jones.
- (viii) The training exercise planned for Mr. Gozzi was a free fall of 20 seconds duration from a height of 5400 feet, including a back loop manoeuvre, with parachute deployment at not less than 2500 feet. All of the other parachutists on board planned to leave the aircraft in a group at a greater height.
- (ix) Mr. Gozzi exited the aircraft cleanly at 5400 feet and took up the normal face to earth position, which he held in a stable fall for about 10 seconds, sufficient time to build up speed for the manoeuvre. He then attempted the back loop but rolled off part-way through this and the fall became unstable. After a few seconds, partial stability was regained and he continued falling with a slow, flat, spinning rotation. At a very low height, probably about 150 to 200 feet above the ground, the main parachute commenced to deploy but it had not fully opened before the parachutist struck the ground at a high rate of descent.
- (x) Examination of the equipment after the accident revealed that the main parachute had been activated and there was nothing to suggest it would not have fully deployed if there had been sufficient time and height available. The reserve parachute was intact and had not been activated. There was no evidence of any defect or error in the packing of either parachute which might have contributed to the accident. Examination of the altimeter did not indicate any defect which might have affected its normal operation prior to the accident.

OPINION AS TO CAUSE

The probable cause of the accident was that the development of an unstable condition during a free fall distracted the parachutist to the extent that he did not take timely action to activate his main parachute.

Approved for publication



(Frank E. Yeend)

Deputy Director-General of Civil Aviation

Date

22.11.1974