



GOVERNMENT OF AUSTRALIA

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT

AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION SUMMARY REPORT

Reference No.

AS/755/1022

Publication of this report is authorised by the Secretary under the provisions of Air Navigation Regulations 283 (1)

1. LOCATION OF OCCURRENCE

Wongan Hills, Western Australia	Height a.m.s.l. 1000 feet	Date 1.9.75	Time (Local) 0647 hours	Zone WST
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2. THE AIRCRAFT

Make and Model Piper PA28/140 'Cherokee'	Registration VH-STG	Certificate of Airworthiness Valid from 21.3.75
Certificate of Registration issued to Wongan Hills Aero Club (Inc.), P.O. Box 161, Wongan Hills, Western Australia.	Operator M. G. Freestone, Kondut, Western Australia.	Degree of damage to aircraft Destroyed
		Other property damaged Nil
Defects discovered Nil		

3. THE FLIGHT

Last or intended departure point Wongan Hills	Time of departure 0643 hours	Next point of intended landing Bibby Spring	Purpose of flight Travel	Class of operation Private
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4. THE CREW

Name	Status	Age	Class of licence	Hours on type	Total hours	Degree of injury
Michael Graeme FREESTONE	Pilot	25	Private	6	70	Fatal

5. OTHER PERSONS (All passengers and persons injured on ground)

Name	Status	Degree of injury	Name	Status	Degree of injury
Brian Thomas FREESTONE	Passenger	Fatal	Michael Whare MAKIRI	Passenger	Fatal

6. RELEVANT EVENTS

At about 0600 hours the pilot and his passengers proceeded by motor vehicle from Kondut to the aerodrome at Wongan Hills. At 0632 hours the pilot contacted the Perth Briefing Office by telephone and, after obtaining the appropriate area meteorological forecast, he submitted flight plan details in respect of a flight to Bibby Spring and return. He indicated that his expected time of departure from Wongan Hills was 0645 hours, the flight time would be 45 minutes in each direction, the fuel endurance was 180 minutes and the flight was to be conducted in accordance with the Visual Flight Rules. This telephone communication was completed at 0638 hours.

The aerodrome at Wongan Hills is situated immediately to the north of the town and there is evidence to suggest that, about the time the aircraft took off, patches of low cloud and fog were moving from the south over the town and towards the aerodrome. The aircraft took off to the south and shortly afterwards it was heard, and briefly observed, flying over the town at a low height below and in the vicinity of low cloud. The engine noise was initially normal but it was heard to change and this change was almost immediately followed by the sound of a crash. Arrangements were made to search for the aircraft but, by this time, the aerodrome was shrouded in fog. When the fog lifted at about 0815 hours, the wreckage of VH-STG was located some 100 metres to the west of the southern end of the strip from which the aircraft had departed.

The aircraft had struck the ground in a steep nose down, left wing down attitude. Detailed examination of the wreckage did not reveal any evidence of pre-impact structural failure, malfunction or mechanical failure which could have contributed to the accident. The body of a dog, which had been restrained only by a length of cord attached to its collar, was located in the wreckage but it was not possible to determine if the presence of the dog was significant to the accident. There is evidence to suggest that the pilot had intended to uplift an item of farm equipment to Bibby Spring but this was later found left in his motor vehicle and it is possible, therefore, that he was returning to land to collect the item.

OPINION AS TO CAUSE

The probable cause of the accident was that the pilot, who was not qualified for flight in other than visual meteorological conditions, operated the aircraft in weather conditions which precluded continual visual reference being maintained.

Approved for
publication(I.M. Leslie)
Delegate of the Secretary

Date

4.2.76

DEFINITIONS

ACCIDENT - An occurrence associated with the operation of an aircraft which takes place between the time any person boards the aircraft with the intention of flight until such time as all those persons have disembarked and in which

- (a) any person suffers death or serious injury as a result of being in or upon the aircraft or by direct contact with the aircraft or anything attached to the aircraft; or
- (b) the aircraft suffers substantial damage.

FATAL INJURY - Any injury which results in death within 30 days.

SERIOUS INJURY - Any injury other than a fatal injury which

- (a) requires hospitalisation for more than 48 hours, commencing within seven days from the date the injury was received; or
- (b) results in a fracture of any bone (except simple fractures of fingers, toes or nose); or
- (c) involves lacerations which cause severe haemorrhages, nerve, muscle or tendon damage; or
- (d) involves injury to any internal organ; or
- (e) involves second or third degree burns, or any burns affecting more than five percent of the body surface.

MINOR INJURY - Any injury other than as defined under "Fatal Injury" or "Serious Injury".

DESTROYED - Consumed by fire, demolished or damaged beyond repair.

SUBSTANTIAL DAMAGE - Damage or structural failure which adversely affects the structural strength, performance or flight characteristics of the aircraft and which would normally require major repair or replacement of the affected component. The following types of damage are specifically excluded: engine failure, damage limited to an engine, bent fairings or cowling, dented skin, small punctured holes in the skin or fabric, taxi-ing damage to propeller blades, damage to tyres, engine accessories, brakes, or wingtips.

MINOR DAMAGE - Damage other than as defined under "Destroyed" or "Substantial Damage".