

1. LOCATION OF OCCURRENCE

Preolenna, Tasmania.	Height a.m.s.l. (ft) 1000 feet	Date 18.2.1970	Time (Local) 0815	Zone TST
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2. THE AIRCRAFT

Make and Model Piper PA25-235 "Pawnee"	Registration VH-BSB	Certificate of Airworthiness	Valid from 1.7.66	Valid to 30.6.75
Registered Owner Benders Spreading Services (1964) Pty. Ltd., 21 Coleman Street, Moonah, Tasmania.	Operator Benders Spreading Services (1964) Pty. Ltd., 21 Coleman Street, Moonah, Tasmania.	Degree of damage to aircraft Substantial		
Defects discovered The tail wheel fork was found to have a pre-existing crack.		Other property damaged Five panels of barbed wire fencing		

3. THE FLIGHT

Last or intended departure point Agricultural Strip	Time of departure 0810	Next point of intended landing Departure Point	Purpose of flight Superphosphate Spreading	Class of operation Aerial Work
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4. THE CREW

Name	Status	Age	Class of licence	Hours on type	Total hours	Degree of injury
David Craig SHEARER	Pilot	26	Commercial	143	537	Nil

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

Name	Status	Degree of injury	Name	Status	Degree of injury

6. CONTRAVENTIONS OF REGULATIONS AND ORDERS

Regulation or Order No.	Nature of contravention

7. RELEVANT EVENTS

The aircraft was operating over hilly and moderately timbered terrain in which any cleared areas were fenced into small paddocks about 100 yards square. While conducting a procedure turn at about 100 feet to reverse the aircraft heading, the pilot experienced a complete loss of engine power. He conducted an abbreviated trouble check before attempting to land the aircraft on the most suitable area. The aircraft struck a barbed wire fence at the approach end of a small paddock and after rolling for about 100 yards with the brakes fully applied, the pilot used the sloping ground to assist him in a 290 degree ground loop to the right. During his manoeuvre the tail wheel fork failed. The aircraft fuel tank was found to contain one pint of fuel whereas the contents gauge indicated that eight gallons remained.

8. OPINION AS TO CAUSE

The cause of the accident was that the aircraft sustained a complete loss of engine power at a height, and over terrain, that precluded the possibility of a successful forced landing. The loss of engine power was from fuel exhaustion as a result of an incorrectly calibrated fuel tank contents gauge.

Report approved

D. S. Graham

(D. S. GRAHAM)

Designation

Assistant Director-General
(Air Safety Investigation)

Date

9.2.1971

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".