



## AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION SUMMARY REPORT

Reference No

SI/784/1024

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

## 1. LOCATION OF OCCURRENCE

20 kilometres west-south-west of Andado Station, N. T.	Height a.m.s.l. 550 feet (approx)	Date 11.7.78	Time (Local) 1537 hours (APPROX)	Zone CS1
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## 2. THE AIRCRAFT

Make and Model Cessna 172H	Registration VH-KWT	Certificate of Airworthiness Valid from 27.1.76
Certificate of Registration issued by	Operator	Degree of damage to aircraft Destroyed
		Other property damaged Nil
Defects discovered  Nil		

## 3. THE FLIGHT

Last or intended departure point Finke	Time of departure 1507 hours	Next point of intended landing Andado	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
	Pilot	55	Private	1260 (approx)	3150 (approx)	Serious

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

Name	Status	Degree of injury	Name	Status	Degree of injury

## 6. RELEVANT EVENTS

The pilot was the owner/manager of Andado Station. He departed Andado at 1105 hours and passed flight details by radio to Alice Springs Flight Service Unit (FSU) for a flight Andado- Finke -Andado under the Visual Flight Rules (VFR). Flight time in each direction was estimated to be 20 minutes. The pilot nominated 1730 hours as the time at which search and rescue action should commence in the event that his return to Andado had not been notified. On arrival in the circuit area at Finke he advised that he would confirm his departure time.

He walked the 1500 metres from the airstrip to the township and remained there for about three and one half hours, his intention being to supervise the loading of cattle at the local railhead. When the expected train did not arrive he decided to return to Andado.

He then walked back to the airstrip and at approximately 1513 hours, Alice Springs FSU received a call from the pilot to the effect that he had departed Finke at 1507 hours. Communications were poor and after a brief contact the FSU requested the pilot to call on a different frequency. There was no further communication with the aircraft.

After the twenty minutes estimated flight time had elapsed, Alice Springs FSU took steps to establish the whereabouts of VH-KWT. Unsuccessful attempts were made, through the Royal Flying Doctor Service radio network, to contact Andado. These calls were intercepted by the occupants of another station in the general area, who volunteered to conduct a search with their own aircraft.

This search located the wreckage of VH-KWT at 1737 hours and reported that the pilot was alive and moving around the wreckage on his hands and knees.

The injured pilot was rescued by a ground party and taken to Andado Station. He was subsequently transferred by air to Alice Springs. He suffered a cardiac arrest and died in hospital about 48 hours after the accident.

## 6. RELEVANT EVENTS (Cont'd)

It is perhaps relevant that the pilot stated that the last thing he could recall prior to the accident was flying along at a height of about 2000 feet.

Examination of the wreckage indicated that the aircraft crashed in a nose down, wings level attitude and probably at a speed exceeding the normal cruising speed. There was no evidence of any pre-existing defect or malfunction of the aircraft which could have contributed to the accident.

The weather was not a factor in the occurrence.

The injuries suffered by the pilot in the accident are considered to be survivable. The extent to which the experience and the injuries sustained contributed to his death cannot be determined with certainty. The nature of the accident, the circumstances in which it occurred and the subsequent fate of the pilot all suggest the probability that the pilot became incapacitated in flight. The nature and extent of any such incapacitation could not be determined.

## 7. OPINION AS TO CAUSE

The cause of the accident was not determined. A likely explanation is that the pilot became incapacitated in flight.

Approved for  
publication

*H. S. Hughes*

Delegate of the Secretary

Date

5.5.80

## 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

Note. - Specifically excluded are: death from natural causes and fatal or serious injury to any person on board whether self-inflicted or inflicted by another person, or to ground support personnel before or after flight, or fatal or serious injury which is not a direct result of the operation of the aircraft, or which concerns stowaways.

- (b) the aircraft suffers substantial damage or is destroyed; or
- (c) the aircraft is missing or is completely inaccessible.

**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 or its accessories, or to propeller blades; bent fairings or cowlings; small dents or puncture holes in the skin; damage to wing tips, antennas, tires, or brakes.

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