

1. LOCATION OF OCCURRENCE

Jandakot Airport, Western Australia	Height a.m.s.l. (ft) Airport level 96 ft	Date 8.1.70	Time (Local) 1420	Zone WST
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2. THE AIRCRAFT

Make and Model	(i) Beech A23A (ii) Piper PA24-250	Registration	(i) VH-RWA (ii) VH-PAR
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3. CONCLUSIONS

At 1420 hours WST on 8th January, 1970, a Beech A23A aircraft, registered VH-RWA, and a Piper PA24-250 aircraft, registered VH-PAR, collided at a height of approximately 100 feet above ground level, whilst on approach to Runway 24 at Jandakot Airport, Western Australia. Although substantially damaged, VH-RWA continued in flight and landed safely on the runway but VH-PAR became uncontrollable following loss of the complete empennage and crashed some 590 feet short of the runway threshold.

(ii) Beech A23A aircraft VH-RWA was owned and operated by the Royal Aero Club of Western Australia, and was engaged on an aerial work flight for the purpose of flying training. Piper PA24 aircraft VH-PAR was owned and operated by Nichols Holdings Pty. Ltd. and was engaged on a private flight from Geraldton to Jandakot.

(iii) The pilot in command of VH-RWA, Eustace Latimer Simmonds, and the pilot under instruction, Douglas McCall, were not injured. The pilot of VH-PAR, Arthur Wichelo Nichols and one passenger, William Alfred Ison Smith, suffered serious injuries. The other passenger, Paul Jabre, suffered minor injuries.

(iv) The Beech A23A aircraft, VH-RWA, sustained substantial damage. The Piper PA24 aircraft, VH-PAR, sustained substantial damage in the collision and was then virtually destroyed by impact forces when it struck the ground. There was no fire.

(v) The pilot in command of VH-RWA, Eustace Latimer Simmonds, aged 47 years, held a current commercial pilot licence, endorsed for the aircraft type and an "A" instructor rating. His total flying experience amounted to 9,856 hours of which 400 hours had been gained on Beech 23 aircraft. The pilot under instruction in VH-RWA, Douglas McCall, aged 20 years, held a current private pilot licence endorsed for the aircraft type. His total flying experience amounted to 168 hours of which 46 hours had been gained on Beech 23 aircraft.

(vi) The pilot of VH-PAR, Arthur Wichelo Nichols, held a current private pilot licence which was not endorsed for the aircraft type. His total flying experience amounted to 3,811 hours of which 37 hours had been gained on PA24 aircraft.

(vii) There was a valid certificate of airworthiness for each aircraft and there is no evidence of any aircraft defect or malfunction which may have contributed to the accident.

(viii) Both aircraft were loaded within safe limits.

(ix) The weather was fine, the visibility was 20 miles and the wind was from 240 degrees at 16 knots with gusts to 25 knots.

(x) At Jandakot, Air Traffic Control procedures require that the pilots maintain their own separation in the aerodrome traffic pattern. In accordance with these procedures, aircraft are required to report when turning onto the base leg of the traffic pattern but such reports are merely acknowledged by the control tower.

(xi) At 1412 hours WST, VH-PAR called Jandakot Tower from Fremantle and advised that he was inbound to Jandakot. Jandakot Tower acknowledged this call and indicated that the runway in use was Runway 24 and that the altimeter setting QNH was 1014 millibars.

CONCLUSIONS (cont'd)

(xii) Following a flying training exercise in the local training area, VH-RWA called Jandakot at 1415 hours WST and advised that it was four miles south of and inbound to Jandakot. This call was acknowledged by Jandakot Tower and the aircraft was similarly instructed to use Runway 24. The altimeter of VH-RWA was set by the pilots to a pressure datum of 1010 millibars, with the intention that the altimeter would read zero when the aircraft landed.

(xiii) At 1417 hours 20 seconds, VH-RWA called "base, touch and go" and was observed by the Tower Controller to be in the base turn position wide out on the circuit. VH-PAR called "turning base" at 1418 hours 5 seconds and was seen turning on to the base leg closer in and rather lower than VH-RWA had been. At this time, the controller assessed that there would be no conflict and that VH-PAR would land well before VH-RWA. The pilots of VH-RWA were aware, from the base leg call made by VH-PAR, that another aircraft was making an approach to the runway. They looked for the aircraft and when they were unable to sight it they assumed, incorrectly, that the aircraft would continue to approach behind them. The occupants of VH-PAR have stated that they had not heard VH-RWA call as it began its base leg, and although they maintained a look out during the approach, they did not sight the other aircraft.

(xiv) The attention of the Tower Controller had been otherwise engaged following his sighting of the aircraft at the beginning of their respective approaches. At about the time he anticipated VH-PAR would be on late final approach, he looked towards the final approach area and saw the two aircraft in close proximity. He immediately transmitted "RWA go around" but before this instruction could be acted upon the aircraft collided.

(xv) The two aircraft, each following a different approach path to the runway, had gradually converged until both aircraft became established on final approach with VH-RWA above and slightly behind VH-PAR. As the two aircraft approached a height of approximately 100 feet above ground level, the flight path of VH-RWA steepened and this aircraft descended on to VH-PAR. The first contact was made between the underside of the mainplane of the upper aircraft and the top of the vertical fin of VH-PAR and the propeller of VH-RWA then contacted the rear fuselage of VH-PAR and severed it.

(xvi) The forward section of VH-PAR rolled quickly to the right and the aircraft fell to the ground with the right wing down in an almost vertical attitude. The main wreckage came to rest approximately 590 feet from the approach end of the runway. The severed tail section landed 60 feet from the main wreckage.

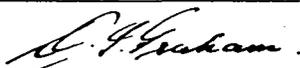
(xvii) Immediately following the collision, the severed tail section of VH-PAR became caught on the leading edge of the port mainplane of VH-RWA. This aircraft rolled steeply to the left and as the instructor pilot took over control the tail section of VH-PAR disengaged and fell to the ground. The pilot in command of VH-RWA was able to regain control and made a safe landing on the intended runway.

(xviii) By flying as pilot in command of VH-PAR whilst his private pilot licence was not endorsed for the PA24 type of aircraft Arthur Wichelo Nichols acted in contravention of Air Navigation Regulation 50(1).

4. OPINION AS TO CAUSE

The probable cause of the accident was that, when operating in an area where safe separation from other aircraft is a pilot responsibility, neither pilot in command ensured that an adequate look out was maintained.

Release approved


(D. S. GRAHAM)

Designation

Assistant Director-General
(Air Safety Investigation)

Date

18.9.1970

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".