



AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION SUMMARY REPORT

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

1. LOCATION OF OCCURRENCE

Norseman Aerodrome, Western Australia	Height a.m.s.l. 863 feet	Date 11.6.78	Time (Local) 2100 hours	Zone WST
---------------------------------------	-----------------------------	-----------------	----------------------------	-------------

2. THE AIRCRAFT

Make and Model Beech D55	Registration VH-DRU	Certificate of Airworthiness Valid from 8.8.75
Certificate of Registration issued to a	Operator	Degree of damage to aircraft Destroyed
		Other property damaged Nil
Defects discovered Nil		

3. THE FLIGHT

Last or intended departure point Norseman	Time of departure -	Next point of intended landing Perth	Purpose of flight Carriage of Passengers	Class of operation Charter
--	------------------------	---	---	-------------------------------

4. THE CREW

Name	Status	Age	Class of licence	Hours on type	Total hours	Degree of injury
	Pilot	37	Commercial	1500 (approx)	5000 (approx)	Fatal

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

Status	Degree of injury	Name	Status	Degree of injury
Passenger	Fatal		Passenger	Fatal
Passenger	Fatal		Passenger	Fatal
			Passenger	Fatal

6. RELEVANT EVENTS

The flight was arranged to transport a party of football players from Perth to Norseman and return to Perth later in the day. Two passengers boarded the aircraft at Jandakot from where it departed at 0805 hours. A landing was made at Perth and the other three passengers boarded. The aircraft then proceeded to Norseman and landed there at about 1000 hours. The passengers and the pilot were then transported by motor coach to Kambalda, 129 km to the north, where the passengers engaged in their sporting activities.

At approximately 1630 hours, the pilot telephoned the Kalgoorlie Flight Service Unit (FSU) to obtain current meteorological forecasts for the return flight. He ascertained that the terminal forecast for Perth indicated a probability of fog and he nominated Meekatharra as an alternate. He advised that his estimated departure time from Norseman was 2100 hours.

The motor coach, with the pilot and his passengers on board, left Kambalda for the return journey at about 1820 hours and arrived at Norseman at about 2000 hours. The pilot then supervised refuelling operations and 195 litres of fuel was added to the tanks of the aircraft.

The landing strip at Norseman, aligned 006/186⁰ magnetic, was illuminated by flares. The sky was clear, it was dark, there was no moon and the wind was light from the south.

The pilot prepared the aircraft for flight and he, followed by the passengers after a slight delay, boarded it. After both engines were started, the aircraft commenced to taxi. At 2055 hours the pilot established radio communication with Perth FSU, reported "taxying" and was advised that there was no known traffic in the area. Acknowledgement of this advice was the last communication received from the aircraft. The aircraft taxied to the northern end of the strip and engine noise heard by bystanders indicated that each engine was run up. The navigation and landing lights of the aircraft were seen to be illuminated. Take-off towards the south was commenced and the aircraft became airborne in an apparently normal manner. At a height of about 200 feet, the aircraft commenced a turn to the left, initially maintaining height, but the angle of bank increased and the aircraft descended until it struck the ground in a steep nose-down, left wing-down attitude on a northerly heading. A fierce fire broke out on impact.

6. Relevant Events (cont'd)

Detailed examination of the wreckage revealed no evidence of any defect or malfunction which might have contributed to the accident. There was evidence to suggest that both engines were producing substantial power at the time of impact.

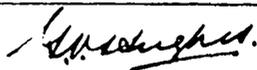
The aircraft was equipped with a device to lock the elevator and aileron controls. The device consisted of a steel pin inserted through a lug on the instrument panel into the underside of the control column. It was also possible to lock the two flight controls together by inserting the pin into the control column without first inserting it through the lug. In this case the aileron controls would be locked and the elevator control could be moved rearward from about the mid position but could not be moved forward of this position.

The control column recovered from the wreckage of VH-DRU had the pin engaged in the locked position but the lug on the instrument panel was destroyed by fire and it was not possible to determine if the pin had been inserted through the lug. Nevertheless, with the pin inserted in either manner, the pilot would not have been able to test the elevator/aileron controls to the full limit of their travel prior to take-off. The flight path of the aircraft was consistent with those controls being locked by either of the two alternative methods.

7. OPINION AS TO CAUSE

The cause of the accident was that the pre-flight procedures adopted by the pilot were inadequate. The reason why adequate procedures were not adopted could not be determined.

Approved for
publication



(G. V. Hughes)
Delegate of the Secretary

Date

25.1.1980

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".