

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA-BUREAU OF AIR SAFETY INVESTIGATION
AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION SUMMARY REPORT

REFERENCE NO.

SI/804/1025

1. LOCATION OF OCCURRENCE

Mount Remarkable, 50 km east-north-east of Port Pirie, S.A.		Height a.m.s.l. 2850 feet
Date: 3/7/80	Time (Local): 1454 hours	Zone: CST

2. THE AIRCRAFT

Make and Model: Piper PA34-200T	Registration: VH-EGD
Certificate of Airworthiness: Valid from 19/8/76	
Certificate of Registration Issued to:	Operator:
Degree of Damage to Aircraft: Destroyed	Other Property Damaged: Nil
Defects discovered: Nil	

3. THE FLIGHT

Last or intended departure point: Leigh Creek	Time of departure: 1354 hours
Next point of intended landing: Adelaide	
Purpose of flight: Travel	Class of Operation: Private

4. THE CREW

Name	Status	Age	Class of Licence	Hours on Type	Total Hours	Degree of Injury
	Pilot	53	Private	450	1627	Fatal

5. OTHER PERSONS (ALL PASSENGERS AND PERSONS INJURED ON GROUND)

Name	Status	Degree of Injury
	Passenger	Fatal
	Passenger	Fatal

6. RELEVANT EVENTS

The pilot held a Class Four instrument rating but was not qualified to fly in instrument meteorological conditions. He attended the Alice Springs briefing office and was issued with meteorological forecasts which indicated that weather conditions were expected to deteriorate south of Leigh Creek. He submitted a VFR (visual flight rules) flight plan for the flight from Alice Springs to Adelaide via Leigh Creek and verbally indicated that, if he encountered adverse weather south of Port Augusta, he would divert to Port Augusta or Port Pirie. The aircraft departed Alice Springs at 1019 hours and the flight to Leigh Creek was completed apparently without incident.

After landing at Leigh Creek at 1317 hours, the aircraft was refuelled to capacity and the pilot obtained the then current meteorological forecasts for the remainder of the flight. These confirmed the earlier forecasts and the pilot was also advised that both Adelaide and Parafield were currently closed to VFR traffic because of adverse weather. The aircraft taxied for departure at 1349 hours and, at that time, there was six oktas of cloud, base 1500 to 2000 feet, over Leigh Creek. The pilot advised that he intended to cruise below 5000 feet instead of 7500 feet as originally planned. At about the time of take-off, another aircraft was advised by Leigh Creek Flight Service Unit (FSU) that an amendment to the Adelaide terminal forecast indicated visibility of 10 km or greater, rain showers, one okta of cloud at 1000 feet and five oktas at 2000 feet with visibility intermittently reduced to 3000 metres with three oktas of cloud at 800 feet. At 1359 hours the pilot of VH-EGD confirmed that he had copied the amended Adelaide forecast.

The flight plan submitted by the pilot at Alice Springs indicated his intention to track via Quorn, Wokurna and Ardrossan but, at 1419 hours, he advised that he would be proceeding direct to Port Augusta and then to Wokurna. He subsequently reported to Adelaide FSU passing abeam of Port Augusta at 1445 hours, below 5000 feet, and advised that he would now be tracking to Dublin. He was advised that restricted area R252, which is situated south-south-west of Port Augusta, was active and he confirmed that he would be remaining clear of that area. The pilot of another aircraft in the area then reported there was a storm in the Gulf north of Port Pirie, the weather was clear to the west, and suggested that 'if Echo Golf Delta tracks via Point Lowly he will have no problems'. At 1451 hours, the pilot of VH-EGD confirmed receipt of this information and responded 'thank you very much I shall do'. As requested, he called Whyalla FSU at 1453 hours but did not reply to any subsequent calls directed to him.

Following unsuccessful attempts to re-establish communications with the aircraft, search and rescue action was commenced. Search action was hampered by areas of low cloud and reduced visibility associated with rain and strong winds. The wreckage of the aircraft was located at 1405 hours on the following day. It was situated on the eastern side of Mount Remarkable some 300 feet below the 3150 feet summit. At impact the aircraft had been in essentially level flight on a south-westerly heading. Detailed examination of the wreckage did not reveal any defect or malfunction which might have contributed to the accident.

It was established that at about the time of the accident, extensive low cloud and rain areas obscured the ranges in the vicinity of Mount Remarkable.

7. OPINION AS TO CAUSE

The cause of the accident was that the pilot continued the flight into weather conditions in which he was unable to maintain the visual references necessary to ensure adequate terrain clearance on his selected flight path.

Approved for publication under the provisions of Air Navigation Regulation 283(1)


(G.V. Hughes) Director

Date:
13 July 1982

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'.