

**Aviation Safety Investigation Report  
199304015**

**Neico Aviation Inc  
Lancair 235**

**04 December 1993**

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**Occurrence Number:** 199304015                      **Occurrence Type:** Accident  
**Location:** Coffs Harbour  
**State:** NSW    **Inv Category:** 3  
**Date:** Saturday 04 December 1993  
**Time:** 1820 hours                                      **Time Zone**                      ESuT  
**Highest Injury Level:** Fatal  
**Injuries:**

	Fatal	Serious	Minor	None	Total
Crew	1	0	0	0	1
Ground	0	0	0	0	0
Passenger	1	0	0	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>

**Aircraft Manufacturer:** Neico Aviation Inc  
**Aircraft Model:** Lancair 235  
**Aircraft Registration:** VH-HTD                      **Serial Number:** N149  
**Type of Operation:** Non-commercial Pleasure/Travel  
**Damage to Aircraft:** Destroyed  
**Departure Point:** Ballina NSW  
**Departure Time:** 1730 ESuT  
**Destination:** Coffs Harbour NSW

**Crew Details:**

<b>Role</b>	<b>Class of Licence</b>	<b>Hours on</b>	
		<b>Type</b>	<b>Hours Total</b>
Pilot-In-Command	Commercial	5.0	150
Other Pilot	Student/Passenger	17.0	48

**Approved for Release:** Thursday, July 21, 1994

The aircraft was being flown to Coffs Harbour in preparation for an open day, during which the aircraft was to be displayed on the ground and in the air. Witnesses at Ballina observed the aircraft take off and conduct a circuit before flying low along the strip in the takeoff direction. The aircraft then pulled up to about 75 degrees nose up, levelled at about 350 ft, and descended again while travelling in the same direction. It then accelerated, turned right, climbed to about 500 ft and departed in the direction of Coffs Harbour.

Witnesses at Coffs Harbour saw the aircraft approach the aerodrome from the west, cross over the main runway, turn right and fly south. The aircraft was then observed to turn north and approach the airfield at low level before abruptly entering a very steep climb. At an altitude estimated by some witnesses as between 200 and 400 ft above ground level, the aircraft rolled right before diving vertically towards the ground and disappearing behind trees. A short time later, the sound of impact was heard and smoke was seen rising above the trees.

Examination of the accident site revealed that the initial impact occurred when the aircraft struck 8m high trees. This ruptured the right fuel tank, providing the fuel source for the fire. Examination of the burnt-out wreckage indicated that at ground impact, the aircraft was yawing right and skidding left. The aircraft struck the ground with about 7 degrees of left bank, a level nose attitude and low horizontal speed. The engine was operating at low power at the time of impact.

Of the two occupants of the aircraft, one held a commercial pilot's licence and the other a student pilot's licence with passenger carrying approval. Consequently, the latter was not qualified to act as pilot-in-command for the flight from Ballina to Coffs Harbour. It was not possible to establish who was controlling the aircraft at the time of the accident. Both pilots had limited total flying experience, as well as limited experience on the aircraft type.

The investigation concluded that, following the pull-up from about tree height, the aircraft probably stalled and entered an incipient spin to the right. Recovery from the spin was not effected prior to ground impact. The reason for conducting the pull-up manoeuvre was not determined.

## FACTORS

The factors considered relevant to the development of the accident were:

1. The experience level of both pilots was low.
2. Control of the aircraft was lost at a height insufficient to effect a safe recovery.