



**Australian Government**

**Australian Transport Safety Bureau**

**ATSB TRANSPORT SAFETY INVESTIGATION REPORT**

Aviation Occurrence Report – 200507079

Final

**In-flight breakup – Watson’s Island, US  
19 December 2005**

**N2969**

**Grumman G-73T, Turbo Mallard**





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**Abstract**

On 21 September 2006 at 2356 Eastern Standard Time, the US National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) notified the Australian Transport Safety Bureau (ATSB) of an accident involving a foreign registered and operated Grumman G-73T, Turbo Mallard, aircraft, which occurred on 19 December 2005 near Watson’s Island, US (see <http://www.nts.gov/ntsb/major.asp> and DCA06MA010). The NTSB requested assistance from the ATSB to obtain information relating to the operation of Turbo Mallard aircraft in Australia.

The ATSB appointed an accredited representative to participate in the investigation into the occurrence, in accordance with clause 5.23 of Annex 13 to the Convention on International Civil Aviation. To protect the information supplied by the NTSB to the ATSB and the investigative work undertaken to assist the NTSB, the ATSB initiated an investigation under the *Transport Safety Investigation Act 2003*.

The ATSB accredited representative coordinated the exchange of airworthiness information from an Australian operator of Mallard aircraft. That operator had modified an aircraft by fitting turbine engines.

The NTSB will publish the final investigation report regarding the occurrence.

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# THE AUSTRALIAN TRANSPORT SAFETY BUREAU

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The Australian Transport Safety Bureau (ATSB) is an operationally independent multi-modal Bureau within the Australian Government Department of Transport and Regional Services. ATSB investigations are independent of regulatory, operator or other external bodies.

The ATSB is responsible for investigating accidents and other transport safety matters involving civil aviation, marine and rail operations in Australia that fall within Commonwealth jurisdiction, as well as participating in overseas investigations involving Australian registered aircraft and ships. A primary concern is the safety of commercial transport, with particular regard to fare-paying passenger operations.

The ATSB performs its functions in accordance with the provisions of the Transport Safety Investigation Act 2003 and Regulations and, where applicable, relevant international agreements.

## **Purpose of safety investigations**

The object of a safety investigation is to enhance safety. To reduce safety-related risk, ATSB investigations determine and communicate the safety factors related to the transport safety matter being investigated.

It is not the object of an investigation to determine blame or liability. However, an investigation report must include factual material of sufficient weight to support the analysis and findings. At all times the ATSB endeavours to balance the use of material that could imply adverse comment with the need to properly explain what happened, and why, in a fair and unbiased manner.

## **Developing safety action**

Central to the ATSB's investigation of transport safety matters is the early identification of safety issues in the transport environment. The ATSB prefers to encourage the relevant organisation(s) to proactively initiate safety action rather than release formal recommendations. However, depending on the level of risk associated with a safety issue and the extent of corrective action undertaken by the relevant organisation, a recommendation may be issued either during or at the end of an investigation.

The ATSB has decided that when safety recommendations are issued, they will focus on clearly describing the safety issue of concern, rather than providing instructions or opinions on the method of corrective action. As with equivalent overseas organisations, the ATSB has no power to implement its recommendations. It is a matter for the body to which an ATSB recommendation is directed (for example the relevant regulator in consultation with industry) to assess the costs and benefits of any particular means of addressing a safety issue.

**About ATSB investigation reports:** How investigation reports are organised and definitions of terms used in ATSB reports, such as safety factor, contributing safety factor and safety issue, are provided on the ATSB web site [www.atsb.gov.au](http://www.atsb.gov.au).

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## FACTUAL INFORMATION

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<sup>1</sup> Any State which on request provides information, facilities or experts to the State conducting the investigation shall be entitled to appoint an accredited representative to participate in the investigation.