

## 1. LOCATION OF OCCURRENCE

|                                                 |                                  |                 |                      |             |
|-------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------|-------------|
| Two miles south of Warragamba, New South Wales. | Height a.m.s.l. (ft)<br>600 feet | Date<br>21.9.69 | Time (Local)<br>1620 | Zone<br>EST |
|-------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------|-------------|

## 2. THE AIRCRAFT

|                                                                                                   |                                                                                           |                                               |                       |                     |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| Type and Model<br>PA24-250 Comanche                                                               | Registration<br>VH-RSW                                                                    | Certificate of Airworthiness                  | Valid from<br>18.6.65 | Valid to<br>17.6.74 |
| Registered Owner<br>Royal Aero Club of New South Wales,<br>Bankstown Airport,<br>New South Wales. | Operator<br>Royal Aero Club of New South Wales,<br>Bankstown Airport,<br>New South Wales. | Degree of damage to aircraft<br>Destroyed     |                       |                     |
| Defects discovered                                                                                |                                                                                           | Other property damaged<br>Post and wire fence |                       |                     |

## 3. THE FLIGHT

|                                                       |                           |                                                     |                               |                               |
|-------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Last or intended departure point<br>Bankstown Airport | Time of departure<br>1547 | Next point of intended landing<br>Bankstown Airport | Purpose of flight<br>Pleasure | Class of operation<br>Private |
|-------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|

## 4. THE CREW

| Name                  | Status | Age | Class of licence | Hours on type | Total hours | Degree of injury |
|-----------------------|--------|-----|------------------|---------------|-------------|------------------|
| John Bernard NICHOLLS | Pilot  | 57  | Private          | 47 hours      | 4032 hours  | Serious          |

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

| Name                | Status    | Degree of injury | Name                 | Status    | Degree of injury |
|---------------------|-----------|------------------|----------------------|-----------|------------------|
| Peter McKay WEIR    | Passenger | Serious          | Michael Helmore HEAD | Passenger | Fatal            |
| Bernard James KENNY | Passenger | Serious          |                      |           |                  |

## CONTRAVENTIONS OF REGULATIONS AND ORDERS

| Regulation or Order No. | Nature of contravention |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|
|                         |                         |

## RELEVANT EVENTS

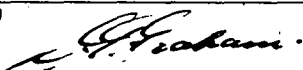
Prior to making this flight, the pilot had not flown the aircraft type since February 1969. The aircraft was refuelled before departure and adequate fuel was available for the flight. In the vicinity of Warragamba at 2500 feet the pilot changed the fuel selection from the right tank on which he had been operating and after a few seconds the engine ceased to give power. He checked the engine controls and changed the position of the fuel selector several times. Apart from a brief period of surges of power his efforts to restart the engine were of no avail and he chose a field on which to carry out a forced landing. He was unable to position the aircraft for a successful approach to the selected field and, when this became apparent over the final few hundred feet of descent, he continued on a straight course until the aircraft struck a tree and crashed to the ground among trees in the vicinity of out-buildings attached to a farm property.

The aircraft was fitted with two fuel tanks and the fuel selector provided for selection of left or right tank or 'off'. The selector also had detent positions for two auxiliary tanks which are not fitted to this particular aircraft and, to prevent selection of these positions at which the fuel is not available, the selector incorporated a small strip of aluminium with the ends bent to form stops. When the aircraft was examined it was found that the starboard stop was overridden and the selector was set to approximately the port auxiliary tank selection.

## 8. OPINION AS TO CAUSE

The cause of the accident was that following an engine power failure the pilot misjudged the forced landing approach. The engine power failure was a result of the pilot making an incorrect fuel tank selection.

Report approved



(D.S. GRAHAM)

Designation

Assistant Director-General  
(Air Safety Investigation)

Date

6.5.70