

AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION SUMMARY REPORT

AS/723/1032

Publication of this report is authorised by the Director-General of Civil Aviation under the provisions of Air Navigation Regulation 283(1)

LOCATION OF OCCURRENCE

Three kilometres south-west of Bylands, Victoria	Height a.m.s.l. 1250 feet	Date 4.8.72	Time (Local) 0853 hours	Zone EST
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2. THE AIRCRAFT

Make and Model Cessna 150D	Registration VH-DIU	Certificate of Airworthiness Valid from 4.12.64 to 3.12.73
Certificate of Registration issued to T.C. Comans, Hamilton Street, Kilmore, Victoria.	Operator T.C. Comans, Hamilton Street, Kilmore, Victoria.	Degree of damage to aircraft Destroyed
		Other property damaged Nil

Defects discovered

Both fuel quantity transmitter wiper contacts were worn to the extent that fuel quantity gauge indications were probably unreliable.

3. THE FLIGHT

Last or intended departure point Bylands	Time of departure Unknown	Next point of intended landing Avenel	Purpose of flight Travel	Class of operation Private
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4. THE CREW

Name	Status	Age	Class of licence	Hours on type	Total hours	Degree of injury
Thomas Cornelius COMANS	Pilot	62	Private	129	485	Fatal

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

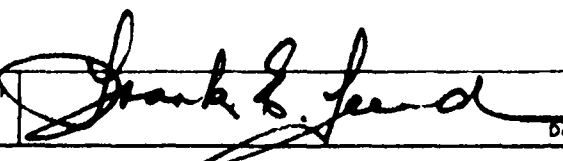
Name	Status	Degree of injury	Name	Status	Degree of injury

6. RELEVANT EVENTS

The pilot first obtained a private pilot licence in April, 1966 but, because he had not completed a course of navigation flying training, his licence was valid only for flight within five miles of any departure aerodrome or within the confines of a flying training area. He was not qualified to fly in other than visual meteorological conditions. The aircraft was normally based in a hangar on the pilot's property near Bylands and fuelled from drums stored in the hangar. Because of oil industry labour problems the pilot had recently been unable to obtain fuel and there was none remaining in the drums in the hangar. On several previous occasions he had flown into an airstrip on a property adjoining another which he owned near Avenel, some 32 miles distant. Some time before 0745 hours on the day of the accident he telephoned the owner of the property on which the airstrip was situated, advised of his intention to make the flight and obtained details of the weather conditions existing in that area. There is no record of him requesting or obtaining an aviation meteorological forecast. He drove alone in his car from a farmhouse on his Bylands property to the hangar and, about this time, there was fog and low cloud in the area. There are no known witnesses to the take-off or subsequent flight of the aircraft but, just after 0850 hours, a farmer located about five kilometres south-west of the Bylands airstrip heard the sound of an aircraft flying low to the north-east but he did not see the aircraft. He heard a change in engine note followed almost immediately by a dull thud. Some 15 minutes later the wreckage of the aircraft was located 165 metres south-east of the southern end of the Bylands airstrip. Weather conditions at the accident site were then foggy with extensive low cloud, a light northerly wind and the visibility was restricted to less than one kilometre. An examination of the wreckage indicated that the aircraft had struck the ground in a steep spiral dive. No evidence was found of any defect which may have contributed to the accident. There was only a small amount of fuel remaining in the tanks but fuel may have drained away through broken lines after the accident. Nevertheless, it is conceivable that there was an engine power failure arising from fuel exhaustion and it is apparent that the impact was preceded by a loss of control.

7. OPINION AS TO CAUSE

The cause of this accident has not been established but it is apparent that the pilot attempted the flight in weather conditions which were unsuitable and this may have led to the loss of control.

Approved for
publication

(Frank E. Yeend)

Delegate of the Director-General of Civil Aviation

Date

3.2.1975

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
- (b) the aircraft suffers substantial damage.

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, bent fairings or cowling, dented skin, small punctured holes in the skin or fabric, taxi-ing damage to propeller blades, damage to tyres, engine accessories, brakes, or wingtips.

MINOR DAMAGE - Damage other than as defined under "Destroyed" or "Substantial Damage".