



AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION SUMMARY REPORT

AS/753/1051

Publication of this report is authorised by the Secretary under the provisions of Air Navigation Regulations 283 (1)

1. LOCATION OF OCCURRENCE

Nine kilometres north-west of Ararat, Victoria	Height a.m.s.l. 1225 feet	Date 7.12.75	Time (Local) 0750 hours	Time ESUT
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2. THE AIRCRAFT

Type and Model Snow Commander 600 S-2D	Registration VH-FON	Certificate of Airworthiness Valid from 3.12.74
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Certificate of Registration issued to	Operator	Degree of damage to aircraft Destroyed
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Other property damaged Electric Power Line

Objects discovered Nil

3. THE FLIGHT

Last or intended departure point Stawell	Time of departure 0645 hours (Approx)	Next point of intended landing Stawell	Purpose of flight Agricultural Spraying	Class of operation Aerial Work
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4. THE CREW

Name	Status	Age	Class of licence	Hours on type	Total hours	Degree of injury
	Pilot	38	Commercial	Not Known	8000 (Approx)	Fatal

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

Name	Status	Degree of injury	Name	Status	Degree of injury

RELEVANT EVENTS

The pilot was based at Stawell and had undertaken to spray pesticide on oat crops at two properties near Ararat. The crop on the first property was of 40 hectares and the second crop was in a field covering an area of 12 hectares. This field contained several large trees and was bordered at the south-east by a creek and at the south-west by trees. Beyond a fence bordering the north-eastern end there was a small clear area which sloped upwards for some 200 metres to trees and farm buildings situated on a ridge. A single wire power line, aligned approximately north/south, was suspended between a 12 metre pole near the farm buildings and a 10 metre pole some 288 metres to the south. The power line passed about 28 metres east of the eastern corner of the field containing the oat crop. The pilot had not previously sprayed crops in this field but he had sprayed other areas of the property.

During the evening prior to the accident the pilot discussed by telephone the proposed operation, including the location of the crop, trees and power line, with the son of the property owner. There is some doubt, however, as to whether the pilot appreciated the precise location of the power line and its significance to the operation. On the following morning the pilot flew the aircraft from Stawell to the first property and the 40 hectare crop was sprayed without incident. The aircraft then proceeded to the second property and spraying of the 12 hectare crop was commenced at about 0745 hours. Working progressively from the north-west across the field towards the creek, spraying runs were made alternately to the north-east and south-west. The final run was made on a north-easterly heading over and along the south-east boundary of the crop and, upon completion of this run, the aircraft commenced to climb away normally above the rising ground. When the aircraft was about 80 metres beyond the crop, the starboard undercarriage leg struck the power line 12 metres above ground level and the line was dislodged from the poles and severed. The aircraft turned slightly to the right and crashed to the ground in a starboard wing down attitude. The main wreckage came to rest in an upright position 130 metres beyond the point of power line contact and a fierce fire broke out immediately.

7. OPINION AS TO CAUSE

The probable cause of the accident was that the pilot did not plan and conduct the flight with the very high degree of vigilance necessary in agricultural spraying operations.

Approved for publication		(I. M. Leslie) Delegate of the Secretary	Date 15.7.1976
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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".