

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA DEPARTMENT OF CIVIL AVIATION		AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION SUMMARY REPORT		Reference No. AS/693/1033	
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1. LOCATION OF OCCURRENCE

Greendale, 4 miles north east of Ballan, Victoria.	Height a.m.s.l. (ft) 1350 feet	Date 2.7.69	Time (Local) 1010	Zone EST
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2. THE AIRCRAFT

Make and Model Piper PA25/150	Registration VH-FAP	Certificate of Airworthiness	Valid from 28.4.65	Valid to 27.4.74
Registered Owner Field Air (Ballarat) Pty. Ltd., P.O. Box 228, Ballarat, Victoria.	Operator Field Air (Ballarat) Pty. Ltd., P.O. Box 228, Ballarat, Victoria.		Degree of damage to aircraft Destroyed	
			Other property damaged Nil	
Defects discovered Nil				

3. THE FLIGHT

Last or intended departure point Ballarat Aerodrome	Time of departure 0950	Next point of intended landing Ballarat Aerodrome	Purpose of flight Weed 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
George Patrick Coverdale WARBURTON	Pilot	29	Commercial	190 hours	1533 hours	Serious

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

Name	Status	Degree of injury	Name	Status	Degree of injury

6. CONTRAVENTIONS OF REGULATIONS AND ORDERS

Regulation or Order No.	Nature of contravention

RELEVANT EVENTS

The pilot planned a spraying run which involved crossing a ridge below a power line 37 feet above ground level and passing between two trees 54 feet apart. It was necessary also to climb steeply to clear other trees situated 280 feet beyond the ridge. Having completed the run, the pilot realised that his attention had been so concentrated on the obstructions that he was not confident that he had achieved full coverage and he therefore decided that he should make another run across the ridge on a reciprocal track. Upon passing the trees on the approach in this direction, a rapid loss of height was necessary to spray up the slope to the ridge and to ensure clearance from the overhead wire. The pilot achieved correct spraying height when within 100 feet or so of the ridge but was unable to simultaneously align the aircraft for the run and the right wing struck one of the trees. The leading edge was extensively damaged and the pilot closed the throttle in an attempt to land ahead. However, the aircraft entered an uncontrolled turn to the right and after passing through the top of another tree, struck the bank of a creek almost inverted and in a steep nose down attitude. Fire broke out on impact and, although the pilot received a blow on the helmet which momentarily stunned him, he was able to evacuate the aircraft and extinguish his burning clothes in a creek nearby.

8. OPINION AS TO CAUSE

The cause of the accident was that the pilot, who was relatively inexperienced in agricultural operations, selected an unsuitable path for a spray run.

Report approved (I. S. GRAHAM)	Designation Assistant Director-General (Air Safety Investigation)	Date 11.2.70
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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".