

AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION SUMMARY REPORT

Reference No.
AS/693/1058

1. LOCATION OF OCCURRENCE

Low Rocky Point, Tasmania	Height a.m.s.l. (ft) 100 feet	Date 17.12.69	Time (Local) 1230	Zone TST
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2. THE AIRCRAFT

Make and Model Hughes 300 Model 269B	Registration VH-IHK	Certificate of Airworthiness	Valid from 18.8.65	Valid to 17.8.74
Registered Owner Tasmanian Helicopters Pty. Ltd., Symmons Plains, Tasmania.	Operator Tasmanian Aero Club, P.O. Box 450, Launceston, Tasmania.	Degree of damage to aircraft Substantial		
Defects discovered		Other property damaged Nil		

3. THE FLIGHT

Last or intended departure point Strahan	Time of departure 1130	Next point of intended landing Low Rocky Point	Purpose of flight Travel	Class of operation Charter
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4. THE CREW

Name	Status	Age	Class of licence	Hours on type	Total hours	Degree of injury
Robin John WHITE	Pilot	28	Commercial Helicopter Fixed Wing	52 -	52 3649	Nil

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

Name	Status	Degree of injury	Name	Status	Degree of injury
Peter BANACH	Passenger	Nil			

6. CONTRAVENTIONS OF REGULATIONS AND ORDERS

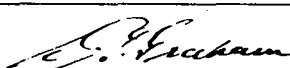
Regulation or Order No.	Nature of contravention
A.N.R. 227(1)(2)	The aircraft was taken off, flown and landed at a weight in excess of the permissible all-up-weight specified.
A.N.R. 120(1)	Dangerous goods, namely a drum of fuel, was carried aboard a passenger aircraft and the permission of the Director-General had not been obtained.

RELEVANT EVENTS

The pilot was trained on the Hughes 200 Model 269A and was issued with a commercial licence (Helicopters) on the 15th December, two days before the accident. The licence endorsement for the Hughes 269 covers both the Model 269A and 269B. Before flying the Model 269B solo, the pilot was accompanied on a local flight for about one hour by the owner of the helicopter. The aircraft was then flown solo by the pilot from Waratah to Strahan where the passenger was picked up. He then flew to Low Rocky Point, in good weather conditions, arriving to observe a wind of about 10 knots from the south. The helipad was a cleared area surrounded by 4 feet high scrub. Approaching to the hover on the northern end of the pad the aircraft began to roll to the right. The pilot stated he attempted to correct the roll with left-cyclic control and initially with some collective, but the aircraft continued to roll to the right even with full left cyclic control. The collective was lowered but the main rotor blades struck the scrub on the right of the aircraft, and the aircraft came to rest on its right hand side.

8. OPINION AS TO CAUSE

The cause of the accident was that the pilot, who was inexperienced on helicopters, lost lateral control of the helicopter. It has not been possible to establish why control was lost.

Report approved  (D.S. GRAHAM)	Designation Assistant Director-General (Air Safety Investigation)	Date 11.11.1970
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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".

DISAPPEARANCE OF FUJI FA200-160 AIRCRAFT VH-FJK
ON A FLIGHT FROM KING ISLAND TO MOORABBIN, VICTORIA
ON 24TH DECEMBER, 1969

CONCLUSIONS OF THE INVESTIGATION

On 24th December, 1969, a Fuji FA200-160 aircraft registered VH-FJK disappeared whilst on a flight from Currie, King Island, to Moorabbin Airport, Victoria, and no trace has since been found of the aircraft or of the pilot who was its sole occupant.

2. The aircraft was owned by Brain and Brown Airfreighters Pty. Ltd. of Cheltenham, Victoria, and having completed a charter flight from Moorabbin to King Island was returning to Moorabbin. No passengers or freight were carried at the time of the disappearance.

3. The aircraft was being flown by Peter Ian Phillips, aged 29 years, the holder of a valid commercial pilot licence which was endorsed for the aircraft type. He had a total aeronautical experience of 1353 hours of which 464 hours had been gained on Fuji aircraft.

4. There was a current certificate of airworthiness for the aircraft and there was no evidence to indicate that the aircraft was in other than an airworthy condition at the time the flight was commenced.

5. There was no evidence that the aircraft was not loaded within safe limits.

6. The aircraft carried three life jackets and one of these was within easy reach of the pilot when the flight departed from the terminal at King Island.

7. The weather conditions forecast for the area during the period of flight were 6/8 of cloud with a base of 2,500 feet, rain showers and visibility of 15 miles reducing to 5 miles in showers.

8. Weather reports indicate that the weather conditions in the area surrounding Cape Otway during the period of the flight were :-

- (a) Wind: West to north west at 20 to 30 knots.
- (b) Seas: Rough (8 to 13 feet).
- (c) Swell: Heavy average from the south west (height 13 feet plus and 300 to 600 feet in length).
- (d) Cloud: Overcast stratus and strato-cumulus base 1-2,000 feet and lower.
- (e) Weather: Rain and drizzle reducing visibility to as little as 2.5 miles.

9. Before departure from Moorabbin, the pilot submitted a flight plan covering the route Moorabbin to King Island and return to Moorabbin. This plan indicated that the flight would be conducted below 5,000 feet outside controlled airspace and under the visual flight rules. The estimated flight time was 210 minutes and the aircraft total endurance was 315 minutes. Ample fuel was carried for the entire flight and adequate provision had been made for fuel reserves.

10. On the flight from Moorabbin to King Island, there is evidence that the aircraft flew at heights between 1,500 feet and 2,000 feet. In the Cape Otway area however the pilot descended to between 500 feet and 1,000 feet due to poor weather conditions and he operated at those levels until the aircraft arrived at King Island.

11. Having completed the charter segment of the flight and discharged its passengers, the aircraft departed from the Currie aerodrome at King Island at 1615 hours EST. The Flight Service Unit at King Island suggested that the aircraft remain on a communications frequency of 122.1 mcs until the aircraft reached Cape Otway and the pilot accepted this suggestion. Following a departure signal, nothing was heard from the aircraft until 1649.58 hours EST, at which time the pilot broadcasted a distress call and indicated that his estimated position was 5 miles south of Cape Otway, that his engine oil pressure was dropping rapidly and that he might have to ditch the aircraft. This call was not heard at either King Island or Melbourne Flight Service Units, but was recorded by the automatic tape recorder at the Melbourne Flight Service console.

12. At 1650.58 hours EST the pilot again broadcast a distress message, this time on a frequency of 120.7 mcs, repeating his position as 5 miles south of Cape Otway and confirming that he had no engine oil pressure and would be compelled to ditch. This call was answered by Melbourne Flight Service and the Distress Phase of the search and rescue procedures was declared at 1652 hours EST.

13. The pilot continued to call throughout the descent, advising at 1653.29 that he was losing height rapidly, was down to 300 feet with the aircraft vibrating badly and the oil pressure "off the scale". At 1654.52 a message relayed through another aircraft indicated that the aircraft was down to 200 feet in fairly heavy rain showers and the pilot was unable to see the coast. The final communication from the aircraft came at 1655.25 when the pilot called that he was below 100 feet and "going in". All of these transmissions were acknowledged by Melbourne Flight Service.

14. Immediate action was taken under the search and rescue procedures to divert aircraft into the area to search and to mount a comprehensive air, sea and coastal search.

15. A general air search of the area was commenced at 1730 hours EST in very poor weather conditions such that only one aircraft could be permitted to operate in the actual search area. By 1900 hours the weather had improved slightly and two aircraft were made available with droppable equipment. These aircraft continued searching until approximately 2200 hours. Last light in the area was at 2014 hours.

16. The Apollo Bay fishing fleet arrived in the area at approximately 1945 hours and commenced searching under extremely difficult conditions. The fleet was allotted a general search area pattern south of Cape Otway and to the east and west. They remained in the search area until 2100 hours.

17. The merchant vessel "Chakdima", outbound from Melbourne conducted a search in the area south of Cape Otway. The ship arrived in the area at 2200 hours EST and continued searching until midnight.

18. The coastline was searched by ground patrols and also by use of helicopters.

19. The air and sea search continued throughout the 25th December, 1969, and subsequently on a reduced scale until 28th December, 1969. No sign of the aircraft or the pilot was discovered.

20. During the search for the aircraft a total of 27 sorties were flown for a search time of 46 hours of which 13.5 hours had been flown with helicopters.

21. CAUSE

The probable cause of the disappearance of the aircraft was an engine malfunction which compelled the pilot to land the aircraft in the sea. The nature of such engine malfunction has not been established.