



GOVERNMENT OF AUSTRALIA

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT

Reference No.

## AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION SUMMARY REPORT

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

AS/744/1021

## 1. LOCATION OF OCCURRENCE

|                                                   |                             |                 |                            |             |
|---------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|----------------------------|-------------|
| 8 kilometres north-west of Whyalla Airport, S. A. | Height a.m.s.l.<br>200 feet | Date<br>13.5.74 | Time (Local)<br>0425 hours | Zone<br>CST |
|---------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|----------------------------|-------------|

## THE AIRCRAFT

|                                                                                                          |                                                                             |                                                                            |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Make and Model<br>Victa "Airtourer 100"                                                                  | Registration<br>VH-BWF                                                      | Certificate of Airworthiness<br>Valid from 7.11.63                         |
| Certificate of Registration issued to<br>R. J. Hall,<br>53 Roberts Terrace,<br>Whyalla, South Australia. | Operator<br>R. J. Hall,<br>53 Roberts Terrace,<br>Whyalla, South Australia. | Degree of damage to aircraft<br>Destroyed<br>Other property damaged<br>Nil |
| Defects discovered<br><br>Nil                                                                            |                                                                             |                                                                            |

## 3. THE FLIGHT

|                                                     |                                             |                                           |                              |                               |
|-----------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Last or intended departure point<br>Whyalla Airport | Time of departure<br>0400 hours<br>(Approx) | Next point of intended landing<br>Unknown | Purpose of flight<br>Unknown | Class of operation<br>Private |
|-----------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|

## 4. THE CREW

| Name             | Status | Age | Class of licence | Hours on type | Total hours | Degree of injury |
|------------------|--------|-----|------------------|---------------|-------------|------------------|
| Rodney John HALL | Pilot  | 30  | Private          | 329           | 438         | 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 spent most of the day of 12 May, 1974 at the Whyalla Airport and, at about 1730 hours, he adjourned to the club house of the local aero club. During the next few hours he consumed a considerable number of glasses of beer in the company of various club members until, at approximately 2200 hours, he left the club house. He then proceeded to the residence of his parents where he consumed more alcoholic drinks until, at about 0230 hours on the following morning, he drove his car to his own residence. Shortly afterwards he telephoned his mother to say that he had arrived home safely but he is not known to have had communication with, or been seen by, any person subsequently.

On the evening of 14 May, the pilot's mother became aware, and so reported, that her son could not be located, that he had not attended his place of employment for two days, that his car was parked at the airport and that his aircraft was not at the airport where it was normally stationed. At 2130 hours, following checks which confirmed that the pilot and his aircraft were missing, the Distress Phase of Search and Rescue procedures was declared by Adelaide Air Traffic Control. An extensive air, sea and land search was carried out until the morning of 17 May, when the wreckage of VH-BWF was located by a searching aircraft.

Examination of the wreckage indicated that the aircraft had dived steeply at high speed into soft ground and virtually disintegrated at impact. There was no evidence of any pre-impact structural failure, system malfunction or mechanical failure which could have contributed to the accident. The pilot's watch had stopped because of impact damage and indicated 4.25 hours. A comparison of the tachometer reading and the aircraft records indicated that the duration of the final flight was 25 minutes. It seems most likely that the accident occurred before first light on the morning of 13 May at which time light rain was falling from high overcast cloud and there was low cloud with a base of 1000 to 1500 feet. The pilot did not hold any instrument rating and was therefore restricted to flight in visual meteorological conditions by day. His log book indicated that he had no instrument flight time and that his night flying experience was limited to one dual flight of 15 minutes some nine months prior to the accident.

## OPINION AS TO CAUSE

The probable cause of the accident was that the pilot undertook a flight in circumstances for which he was not qualified and when his judgement was impaired by fatigue and the consumption of alcohol.

Approved for  
publication( Frank E. Yeend )  
Delegate of the Secretary

Date

6.6.1975

## 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 cowlings, 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".