

AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION SUMMARY REPORT

Reference No

AS/732/1025

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

1. LOCATION OF OCCURRENCE

Seven miles west of Mudgee, New South Wales	Height a.m.s.l. 1700 feet	Date 18.3.73	Time (Local) 0715 hours	Zone EST
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2. THE AIRCRAFT

Make and Model Piper PA25/235 "Pawnee"	Registration VH-PEP	Certificate of Airworthiness Valid from 18.8.1965 to 17.8.1974
Certificate of Registration issued to H.J. Van Schaik, P.O. Box 150, Mudgee, New South Wales.	Operator M. Van Schaik & A. Fittler, Trading as Tablelands Air Service, P.O. Box 150, Mudgee, New South Wales.	Degree of damage to aircraft Destroyed Other property damaged Fencing

Defects discovered

Nil

3. THE FLIGHT

Last or intended departure point Agricultural Airstrip	Time of departure 0710 hours	Next point of intended landing Point of Departure	Purpose of flight Superphosphate Spreading	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
Henry Joseph Van SCHAIK	Pilot	35	Commercial	3000	7250	Fatal

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

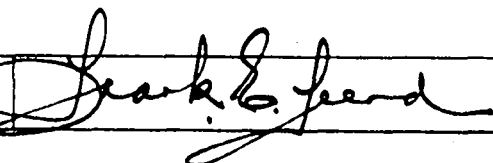
Name	Status	Degree of injury	Name	Status	Degree of injury

6. RELEVANT EVENTS

Early in the day the pilot flew the aircraft from Mudgee to the airstrip situated about $\frac{3}{4}$ mile south of the property on which superphosphate was to be spread. The weather was fine, the wind was calm and visibility was unrestricted. Although the pilot did not carry out a ground or aerial inspection of the property prior to commencing operations, nor did he obtain a specific briefing regarding the location of power lines on the property, he had carried out similar operations on this property periodically during the previous five years. On this occasion he was working in conjunction with the pilot of another aircraft operating from the same airstrip. On the first flight from the airstrip the aircraft was operated, and superphosphate spread, along portion of the boundaries of the property and it then landed and was re-loaded. After take-off again towards the south-east the aircraft turned towards the north and followed a flight path which was parallel to and immediately to the left of a main road and boundary fence on a north easterly heading. After passing over homestead buildings and adjacent trees, spreading was commenced at an intersecting fence line just beyond the trees. Some 400 feet to the north-east of this fence line the road and the boundary fence changed heading some 20 degrees to the right and there was a power line consisting of two cables 90 feet above ground level crossing the road and fence at right angles at this position. The cables were supported by poles located on higher ground approximately 525 feet to the right and 1050 feet to the left of the flight path of the aircraft. As the aircraft approached the power line it banked to the right, apparently to follow the change in boundary direction and the raised left wing tip struck the cables resulting in a portion of the wing leading edge and upper surface fabric being detached. The aircraft slewed and rolled to the left and struck the ground in an inverted attitude 460 feet beyond the power line where it came to rest against a post and wire fence. A fierce fire occurred immediately.

7. OPINION AS TO CAUSE

There is insufficient evidence available to determine the cause of this accident but it is apparent that the aircraft was being operated in circumstances which demanded that the pilot be very aware of the existence and location of potential obstructions to his flight path.

Approved for
publication

(Frank E. YEEND)

Delegate of the Director-General of Civil Aviation

Date

2.9.1974