

**Aviation Safety Investigation Report
198802416**

Grumman

25 December 1988

Readers are advised that the Australian Transport Safety Bureau investigates for the sole purpose of enhancing transport safety. Consequently, Bureau reports are confined to matters of safety significance and may be misleading if used for any other purposes.

Investigations commenced on or before 30 June 2003, including the publication of reports as a result of those investigations, are authorised by the CEO of the Bureau in accordance with Part 2A of the Air Navigation Act 1920.

Investigations commenced after 1 July 2003, including the publication of reports as a result of those investigations, are authorised by the CEO of the Bureau in accordance with the Transport Safety Investigation Act 2003 (TSI Act). Reports released under the TSI Act are not admissible as evidence in any civil or criminal proceedings.

NOTE: All air safety occurrences reported to the ATSB are categorised and recorded. For a detailed explanation on Category definitions please refer to the ATSB website at www.atsb.gov.au.

Occurrence Number: 198802416 **Occurrence Type:** Accident
Location: Near Medlow Bath Airstrip NSW
Date: 25 December 1988 **Time:** 1015
Highest Injury Level: Serious
Injuries:

	Fatal	Serious	Minor	None
Crew	0	0	1	1
Ground	0	0	0	-
Passenger	0	1	0	1
Total	0	1	0	2

Aircraft Details: Grumman
Registration: VH-IFA
Serial Number: AA5A-0300
Operation Type: Private
Damage Level: Substantial
Departure Point: Medlow Bath NSW
Departure Time: N/A
Destination: Harden NSW

Approved for Release: 11th December 1989

Circumstances:

The pilot had borrowed the aircraft to fly to Medlow Bath to visit his brother who resided on the Blue mountains. He was accompanied by his father and a friend. The pilot had not previously flown from the Medlow Bath airstrip but had inspected it from the ground. After landing, the pilot and his passengers spent about 90 minutes on the ground. The wind appeared to be light and variable so the pilot decided to take off in the 24 direction. He said he lifted off at an indicated airspeed of 50 to 55 knots, but after the aircraft became airborne it did not accelerate or climb. The tailplane struck the branches of trees at the south-western end of the strip. Because the terrain fell away sharply at the end of the strip, the pilot said he lowered the nose of the aircraft in an attempt to increase airspeed. However, the left wing dropped and the aircraft entered an uncontrollable descending turn to the left. The aircraft impacted scrub covered terrain about 300 metres from the end of the strip. A passenger suffered a fractured arm as a result of ground impact. The pilot did not have the owner's permission to operate into the airstrip.

Significant Factors:

The following factors were considered relevant to the development of the accident:

1. The pilot had not previously operated from the airstrip.
2. The pilot attempted to lift off at too low an airspeed and adopted an excessively high nose attitude.
3. The pilot used a flap 10 setting. The Flight manual specifies flaps up for takeoff.
4. The pilot attempted a take off in a direction where the overall slope is 1.5 degrees up.

5. The airstrip was surrounded by tall trees which, when combined with the undulating longitudinal surface of the strip, could create a visual illusion as the pilot was attempting to set pitch attitude.