

**Aviation Safety Investigation Report
199604037**

**Piper Aircraft Corp
Archer
Douglas Aircraft Co Inc
DC3C-R-1830**

07 December 1996

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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.

The Bureau did not conduct an on scene investigation of this occurrence. The information presented below was obtained from information supplied to the Bureau.

Occurrence Number: 199604037 **Occurrence Type:** Incident
Location: Albert Park Lake
State: VIC **Inv Category:** 4
Date: Saturday 07 December 1996
Time: 2130 hours **Time Zone** ESuT
Highest Injury Level: None

Aircraft Manufacturer: Piper Aircraft Corp
Aircraft Model: PA-28-180
Aircraft Registration: VH-WUB **Serial Number:** 28-1460
Type of Operation: Non-commercial Pleasure/Travel
Damage to Aircraft: Nil
Departure Point: Moorabbin Vic
Departure Time:
Destination: Moorabbin Vic

Crew Details:

Role	Class of Licence	Hours on Type	Hours Total
Pilot-In-Command	ATPL	200.0	2300

Aircraft Manufacturer: Douglas Aircraft Co Inc
Aircraft Model: DC3C-R-1830
Aircraft Registration: VH-OVM **Serial Number:** 44-76770
Type of Operation: Charter Passenger
Damage to Aircraft: Nil
Departure Point: Essendon Vic
Departure Time: 2044 ESuT
Destination: Essendon Vic

Approved for Release: Wednesday, December 18, 1996

While outside controlled airspace south of Melbourne city at 2,000 ft, the pilot of DC3, VH-OVM, requested an airways clearance for orbits of the central business district. After a short delay due to ILS traffic, the Essendon tower controller issued the DC3 with a clearance and provided traffic information on a PA28, VH-WUB, also at 2,000 ft.

The pilot of the PA28 called Essendon tower completing a left orbit of the central business district and requested a clearance direct to Point Ormond. His clearance was conditional on remaining clear of the DC3 which he believed he had in sight. Shortly thereafter, the pilot of the DC3 reported a 200 metre near miss with the PA28.

The PA 28 pilot explained that at the time he was asked by the tower controller if he had the DC3 sighted, he saw an aircraft some distance off to the right, which soon passed abeam. He presumed this was the DC3. Believing that DC3 traffic had passed, he was shocked to see aircraft navigation lights directly ahead. Immediately he altered heading slightly to the right but as the navigation lights continued to approach at about the same altitude, he banked steeply right and descended to 1,700 ft.

The PA28 pilot subsequently advised that judging distance to the head-on DC3 lights was difficult because of the background blackness of Port Phillip Bay. For the DC3 pilot, the nearmiss was so sudden he did not achieve any evasive action. Until the PA28 banked steeply, the DC3 pilot did not see it, probably because the PA28 navigation lights merged with the myriad of background lights of Melbourne suburbia.

In hindsight, the PA28 pilot believes each aircraft would have been more easily sighted if aircraft landing lights were on.

