

**Aviation Safety Investigation Report
199500414**

**Aero Commander Div
Shrike Commander
Piper Aircraft Corp
Mojave**

15 February 1995

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 Executive Director 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 Executive Director 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.

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: 199500414 **Occurrence Type:** Incident
Location: St Helens
State: TAS **Inv Category:** 4
Date: Wednesday 15 February 1995
Time: 1448 hours **Time Zone** ESuT
Highest Injury Level: None

Aircraft Manufacturer: Aero Commander Div
Aircraft Model: 500-S
Aircraft Registration: VH-EXC **Serial Number:** 3251
Type of Operation: Instructional Dual
Damage to Aircraft: Nil
Departure Point: Hobart TAS
Departure Time:
Destination: Launceston TAS

Aircraft Manufacturer: Piper Aircraft Corp
Aircraft Model: PA-31P
Aircraft Registration: VH-HFD **Serial Number:** 31P-8414044
Type of Operation: Commercial Other
Damage to Aircraft: Nil
Departure Point: St Helens TAS
Departure Time:
Destination: Launceston TAS

Approved for Release: Monday, March 6, 1995

At 0349.34, the pilot of VH-EXC reported to Flight Service (FS) that he was over St Helens at 7000 feet, commencing descent and advised he would report again by 0410 or on missed approach. His intention was to make a practice NDB approach. In response FS advised him that there was no IFR traffic.

At 0357.00, the pilot of VH-HFD reported that he had departed St Helens at 57, was tracking 243 degrees (from the NDB) and was on climb to 8000 feet. (VH-HFD was running 20 minutes early on flight planned estimate for departure St Helens). FS asked him if he had copied VH-EXC (as traffic) to which he replied negative. FS then advised VH-HFD that VH-EXC was in the St Helens area for an NDB approach. The two pilots then made contact with each other. By this time VH-HFD had left 5000 feet on climb and VH-EXC was at 2000 feet, tracking outbound in the NDB approach. Conditions were IMC and it was apparent that the two aircraft had gone through each other's levels, possibly in close proximity.

From timings on the transcript and information provided by the pilots, it was calculated that VH-HFD would have commenced its takeoff roll at about 0352. Engines would have been started two to three minutes prior to then at about 0349. The pilot of VH-HFD said that he made taxi broadcasts on both the FS and Common Traffic Advisory Frequency (CTAF). Both aircraft were dual VHF equipped and both pilots said they were monitoring both CTAF and FS frequencies. The pilot of VH-EXC did not hear either of the taxi calls reportedly made by the pilot of VH-HFD. The pilot of VH-HFD did not hear the call made by the pilot of VH-EXC on arrival over St Helens at 7000 feet. On timings, it is possible that that broadcast was made prior to the pilot of VH-HFD commencing a listening watch on the two frequencies.

On arrival over St Helens at 7000 feet, VH-EXC entered the holding pattern to lose altitude. The outbound leg of the NDB approach was commenced at 4500 feet probably at about 0355. The outbound track is 107 degrees. The pilot of VH-HFD departed from runway 08 at about 0352 and maintained runway heading until reaching 2000 feet where he made a right turn to track back to the NDB while continuing to climb. It is obvious from these timings that the two aircraft passed in close proximity both vertically and laterally while in cloud and on close to reciprocal tracks.

Significant Factors

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

Neither pilot heard advisory broadcasts made by the other pilot. It is possible that the pilot of VH-HFD may not have commenced a listening watch at the time the pilot of VH-EXC made his call on arrival over St Helens but the pilot of VH-EXC should have heard the calls from VH-HFD.

Melbourne FS can not receive calls made on the ground at St Helens so were not aware that VH-HFD was taxiing and were therefore unable to pass traffic information to VH-EXC. In addition, VH-HFD was running 20 minutes early on flight plan so FS could not pass traffic information in anticipation of a planned departure time.

The pilot of VH-HFD did not establish contact with Melbourne FS as soon as possible after becoming airborne. Instead, he waited until he had climbed to 5000 feet and established the aircraft on the departure track. This denied both FS and the pilot of VH-EXC the opportunity to become aware of the whereabouts of VH-HFD.

