



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT

AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION SUMMARY REPORT

Reference No.

SI/771/1003

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

1. LOCATION OF OCCURRENCE

Mount D'Aguilar, Queensland (8 km northwest of Archerfield Airport)	Height a.m.s.l. 2000 feet	Date 2.3.77	Time (Local) 1828 hours	Zone EST
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2. THE AIRCRAFT

Make and Model Piper PA24-260	Registration VH-GAS	Certificate of Airworthiness Valid from 23.12.74
Certificate of Registration issued to	Operator	Degree of damage to aircraft Destroyed
		Other property damaged Nil
Defects discovered Nil		

3. THE FLIGHT

Last or intended departure point Harrison's Pocket	Time of departure 1822 hours	Next point of intended landing Archerfield	Purpose of flight Travel	Class of operation Private
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4. THE CREW

Name	Status	Age	Class of licence	Hours on type	Total hours	Degree of injury
	Pilot	57	Private	1625	3277	Fatal

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

Name	Status	Degree of injury	Name	Status	Degree of injury
Nil					

6. RELEVANT EVENTS

In 1973 the pilot demonstrated the manipulative skill applicable to a Class IV instrument rating but, because of colour blindness his licence was not endorsed to permit him to operate an aircraft in other than Visual Meteorological Conditions (VMC) by day. VH-GAS was fitted with equipment suitable for the conduct of flight in Instrument Meteorological Conditions (IMC).

On the morning of 2 March the pilot submitted a flight plan at Archerfield indicating his intention to proceed to Bundaberg and return, in accordance with the Visual Flight Rules (VFR). The aircraft departed at 0800 hours and proceeded to Bundaberg.

Shortly after departure from Bundaberg at 1402 hours the pilot was advised that both Brisbane Airport and Archerfield Airport were closed to VFR operations. The weather in the Brisbane area was influenced by an unstable southeast stream; during the afternoon conditions fluctuated rapidly with heavy showers and low cloud. The flight continued, as planned, at 7500 feet. When in the vicinity of Gympie the pilot requested Special VFR clearances for flight through the Brisbane Control Zone and entry into the Archerfield Control Zone: these were not granted; he then elected to divert to Maroochydore. The aircraft descended in IMC becoming visual at about 1500 feet; after orbiting to await the passage of a rain shower the aircraft landed at Maroochydore at about 1500 hours.

The pilot telephoned the Archerfield Briefing Office and was briefed concerning the current weather and relevant meteorological forecasts which did not predict any substantial improvement. The pilot decided to proceed to Redcliffe then further review the situation; the flight was conducted at about 1000 feet. On departure from Maroochydore at 1626 hours, and before and after landing at Redcliffe, the pilot again requested Special VFR clearance for flight in the Archerfield Control Zone entering either via the Brisbane Control Zone or the Lane of Entry, or clearance for Brisbane Airport as destination. Clearance was not granted because of low cloud, restricted visibility, and traffic operating in IMC; it was agreed that the requests would be kept under review. Subsequently, attempts to contact the aircraft at Redcliffe through the Brisbane Flight Service Unit (FSU) to offer a Special VFR clearance during a temporary improvement in the situation were not successful.

At 0728 hours the pilot contacted the Brisbane FSU and again asked concerning the possibility of a Special VFR clearance for the Archerfield Control Zone entering via the Lane of Entry; he was advised that the weather was again deteriorating and such clearance was not available. He then flew the aircraft to a

6. Relevant Events (Cont'd)

♦ property at Harrison's Pocket 14 km distant (60 feet a. m. s. l.).

At 1815 hours he telephoned the Archerfield Briefing Office and once more asked concerning a Special VFR clearance. The cloud base at Archerfield Airport was then 1000 feet, the rain had eased, and the visibility was such that Mount Coot-Tha, south of the mid-point along the Lane of Entry, was visible. The pilot was advised that a Special VFR clearance would be granted for flight in the Archerfield Control Zone if entered via the Lane of Entry.

The aircraft took-off into the north and turned westward, possibly to avoid a rain shower to the southwest: the northern entrance to the Lane of Entry is to the southwest of Harrison's Pocket and the Lane is aligned 153 degrees (M). The pilot transmitted the departure time as 1822 hours, the route was stated as the Lane of Entry, and the estimated time of arrival as 1835 hours. Official last light was 1843 hours. The pilot was advised that a Special VFR clearance for flight in the Archerfield Control Zone would be available on reaching Mount Coot-Tha; the acknowledgement was the last communication received. The aircraft was observed flying in drizzle proceeding in a direction of about 210 degrees (M) at a low level beneath low cloud along South Kobbie valley some 9 km west of the Lane of Entry. It was then observed to climb and disappear into cloud.

The wreckage of VH-GAS was located on 6 March some 400 feet below the summit of Mount D'Aguilar at the head of South Kobbie valley. The aircraft had struck a tree in line with the last observed track of the aircraft, then crashed inverted.

7. OPINION AS TO CAUSE

The cause of the accident was that the pilot persisted with the flight at low level towards rising terrain and into conditions of weather and light which inhibited visual navigation.

Approved for
publication

G. V. Hughes

(G. V. Hughes)
Delegate of the Secretary

Date 19.5.78