



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT

AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION SUMMARY REPORT

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

Reference No

SI/772/1506

1. LOCATION OF OCCURRENCE

Long Reef Point, New South Wales

Height a.m.s.l.

2 feet

Date

5.3.1977

Time (Local)

1610 hours

Zone

EST

2. THE AIRCRAFT

Make and Model

Moyes Mini Stinger Hang Glider

Registration

Not Applicable

3. CONCLUSIONS

3.1 At approximately 1610 hours EST on 5 March 1977, a hang glider pilot was fatally injured when the hang glider he was flying crashed onto the beach at Long Reef, New South Wales. There was no injury to any other persons and no damage to property.

3.2 The pilot was , aged 19 years. He held The Self Soaring Association (TASSA) Hang 3 rating and had been engaged in the sport of hang gliding for some 18 months.

3.3 The hang glider was a Rogallo type with a shortened keel. The delta shaped sail was supported by a conventional aluminium alloy tubular framework braced with cables. Control of the hang glider was achieved through body weight shift.

3.4 The Long Reef hang gliding site is an irregular shaped peninsula jutting out into the sea and most flying is carried out when the wind is from the north east. Expert opinion indicated that there are areas which produced severe turbulence, the worst being a hollow near the centre of the site which separated the cliff area from the dune area. In a northerly wind situation it was reported that turbulence in the hollow became even more radical. There was evidence which suggested that the pilot was not entirely familiar with the site although he had apparently flown at the site on at least one prior occasion.

3.5 The weather pattern in the area showed that the sky was partially overcast with thunderstorms active about 32 kilometres west of Long Reef. The wind was generally from the north to north east, gusting at times up to 25 knots.

3.6 On arrival at the site the pilot approached a group of local hang glider enthusiasts and after ascertaining which were the normal take off and landing areas, he commenced assembly of his hang glider with the help of a golfer from the adjacent golf links. Meanwhile, one of the local pilots who was an official observer for TASSA noticed that conditions had deteriorated and he suggested to Mossing that he put off flying for another day. The observer then went back to the cliff edge and made a short flight to verify the turbulent conditions but by the time he had landed and walked back to the take-off area Mossing was being launched with assistance from the golfer.

3.7 The hang glider climbed to about 15 metres above the launch site which was about 33 metres above the level of the beach. It flew seaward in a northerly direction, turned left back towards the cliff face and then flew in a south easterly direction parallel with the cliff face. When it was opposite the hollow the hang glider turned seaward and entered a steeply banked left descending turn. The angle of bank increased and when it was well into the turn the nose dropped and the glider dived vertically into the sand, killing the pilot.

3.8 Examination of the hang glider did not reveal any evidence of a pre-existing defect and there was no evidence to suggest that the pilot had become incapacitated during the flight.

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4. OPINION AS TO CAUSE

The probable cause of the accident was that the pilot attempted a flight in turbulent wind conditions which were beyond his experience and or ability level.

Approved for
publication

Delegate of the Secretary

Date

NOT

NOT TO BE RELEASED