



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT

AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION SUMMARY REPORT

Reference No.

SI/781/1058

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

1. LOCATION OF OCCURRENCE

'Eaglefield' 46km southeast of Mt. Coolon, Qld	Height a.m.s.l. 900 feet	Date 25.10.78	Time (Local) 1400 hours	Zone EST
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2. THE AIRCRAFT

Make and Model Bell 47G3B1 Helicopter	Registration VH-UTJ	Certificate of Airworthiness Valid from 18.11.75
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 Eaglefield Station	Time of departure 1340 hours	Next point of intended landing Eaglefield Station	Purpose of flight Cattle Mustering	Class of operation Aerial Work
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THE CREW

Name	Status	Age	Class of licence	Hours on type	Total hours	Degree of injury
	Pilot	31	Commercial Helicopter	1204	1677	Nil

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

Name	Status	Degree of injury	Name	Status	Degree of injury
	Observer	Fatal			

6. RELEVANT EVENTS

The pilot was the holder of a letter of approval, authorising him to carry out low-level cattle mustering operations. He was experienced at this activity, having flown Bell 47 helicopters in mustering for some 870 hours. During the morning of 25.10.78, the pilot had carried out mustering operations in the vicinity of Eaglefield Station for about four hours. At the conclusion of this he was asked to carry out a further check of the area previously covered, as it was considered some cattle might have been missed during the initial muster. For this flight, the pilot was accompanied by , to assist in spotting cattle. was not experienced in helicopter operations, the pilot reported that he briefed him on such precautions as keeping low to avoid the main rotor whilst entering or disembarking.

Weather conditions in the area were reported as fine, with a surface wind from the east at some 10 to 15 knots and no low-level turbulence. Approximately 20 minutes after take-off cattle were sighted in a moderately timbered area. The trees were some 20 feet tall and the pilot brought the helicopter to a hover, at a height of approximately 30 feet, to chase the cattle out. He reported that a second or two after entering the hover there was a loud noise from behind the cabin area and the helicopter immediately entered a rapid descent. The pilot was not conscious of any abnormal vibration or yaw during the brief descent, and the engine continued to produce power. The helicopter struck the ground in a nose-low, right-banked attitude and then fell back to rest in an approximately level position. A fire broke out. The pilot turned off the engine magnetos and then assisted the observer to release his seat belt. The cabin doors had been removed prior to the mustering operation and both occupants rapidly left the cabin through the openings on their respective sides. The main rotor blades were still turning and the observer was fatally injured when he was struck on the back of the head by one of the blades.

The fire damage was extensive and it was not possible to establish the pre-impact condition of much of the helicopter and its systems. An examination of those components that were not destroyed revealed no evidence of any defect or malfunction which may have contributed to the accident.

7. OPINION AS TO CAUSE

The cause of the accident was not determined.

Approved for publication

(G.V. Hughes)

Delegate of the Secretary

Date

16.4.1981