



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT

AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION SUMMARY REPORT

Reference No.

SI/782/1031

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

1. LOCATION OF OCCURRENCE

Cootamundra, New South Wales	Height a.m.s.l. Undetermined	Date 9.5.78	Time (Local) 1950 hours	Zone EST
------------------------------	---------------------------------	----------------	----------------------------	-------------

2. THE AIRCRAFT

Make and Model DHC 6/200	Registration VH-TGW	Certificate of Airworthiness Valid from 26.3.75
Certificate of Registration issued to	Operator	Degree of damage to aircraft Substantial
		Other property damaged Nil
Defects discovered		

3. THE FLIGHT

Last or intended departure point Sydney	Time of departure 1830 hours	Next point of intended landing Cootamundra	Purpose of flight Carriage of Passengers	Class of operation Commuter
--	---------------------------------	---	---	--------------------------------

4. THE CREW

Name	Status	Age	Class of licence	Hours on type	Total hours	Degree of injury
	Pilot-in-Command	36	Commercial	356	8211	Nil

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

Name	Status	Degree of injury	Name	Status	Degree of injury
13 Passengers		Nil			

6. RELEVANT EVENTS

At 1700 hours on 9.5.78, the pilot reported for duty at Sydney Airport. He was suffering from a mild head cold which he considered was not sufficiently severe to prevent him from flying. He had not sought medical opinion and has stated that he had taken no medication.

After completion of pre-flight preparations the aircraft departed Sydney at 1830 hours. The flight to overhead Cootamundra was uneventful.

The pilot has reported that there was broken cloud in the vicinity of the town with tops at approximately 3000 feet, through which the reflected lights of the town could be seen. He descended visually over the town to 2100 feet above mean sea level, which is 1000 feet above aerodrome elevation. He entered the left downwind leg for runway 16, at which time the aircraft was seen by a witness awaiting its arrival at the aerodrome terminal.

During the course of the downwind leg the pilot carried out pre-landing checks, including the deployment of 10° flap. The runway lighting was already visible to him on his left, but ahead and to the right there were no ground lights and no discernable horizon, so that having passed abeam the runway threshold - at which point the left engine nacelle obscured all of the aerodrome lighting - he was dependent on the aircraft's flight instruments.

The pilot has stated that prior to turning on to base leg of the circuit, he confirmed that the altitude was 2100 feet, that the indicated airspeed was the required 97 knots and that the aircraft's attitude was correct. He reduced engine torque to allow for a gradual descent, intending to establish the aircraft at 1700 feet (that is 600 feet above threshold elevation) at the start of the final approach. In the vicinity of the turn onto base leg the pilot states he experienced pain in his ears and blew his nose to effect a cure, which resulted in a period of dizziness which he estimates lasted two or three seconds. He states that just prior to completing his turn to base leg he flew through a small patch of unseen low stratus for about two seconds and then, on sighting the runway, realised he was low. He immediately took action to increase altitude but at that instant felt a firm bump. He

6. Relevant Events (Cont'd)

concluded that the aircraft had struck the ground and continued with the climb to overhead the aerodrome to assess damage to the aircraft.

Two witnesses, at the aerodrome terminal building, had their attention drawn to the aircraft by the surge of engine power. They saw it low down in the mid base leg position, climbing.

The pilot determined that the rudder and brake pedals were jammed, and the nose wheel steering tiller on the control column was slack and inoperative, thus he was deprived of all control of the rudder, nose wheel steering and wheel braking.

The ground impact had forced the nose landing gear upwards in its attach area, displacing some, and breaking other elevator and rudder control cable pulleys which caused slackening of the cables. This slackness resulted in a limitation of elevator control from the normal, but the pilot did not become aware of this. He advised Flight Service that he would divert to Wagga Wagga and requested that emergency services be made available.

The aircraft landed at Wagga Wagga at 2026 hours EST. Because of the absence of directional control, it veered off the runway on to an unobstructed grass area before coming to rest without further incident.

The damage to the aircraft was consistent with it having struck the ground in a slightly left banked attitude at a rate of descent of the order of 15-20 feet per second. Passenger evidence confirms that the impact occurred in the Cootamundra circuit area, but an extensive air and ground survey failed to locate any ground impact marks, and the precise impact point has not been located.

4. OPINION AS TO CAUSE

From the available evidence it has not been possible to determine the cause of the accident.

Approved for
publication

G. V. Hughes

(G. V. Hughes)
Delegate of the Secretary

Date

2.5.79