



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT

Reference No.

## AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION SUMMARY REPORT

SI/783/1014

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

## 1. LOCATION OF OCCURRENCE

2.5 Km south-south-west of Warrnambool Aerodrome, Vic.	Height a.m.s.l. 125 feet	Date 15.3.78	Time (Local) 1855 hours	Zone EST
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## 2. THE AIRCRAFT

Make and Model Piper PA 32/300	Registration VH-SES	Certificate of Airworthiness Valid from 15.2.74
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 Moorabbin	Time of departure 1755 hours	Next point of intended landing Warrnambool	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	53	Commercial	482	4874	Fatal

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

Name	Status	Degree of injury	Name	Status	Degree of injury
	Passenger	Fatal			

## 6. RELEVANT EVENTS

The pilot held a Class 4 instrument rating and was therefore qualified to operate both by day and night in equal meteorological conditions (VMC) at any time. He also held an 'A' Grade instructor rating.

At about 1730 hours, the pilot attended the Moorabbin Briefing Office and, after obtaining copies of the relevant area and terminal meteorological forecasts, submitted a flight plan for a flight to Warrnambool. The plan indicated that the flight would be in accordance with the visual flight rules (VFR), the expected flight time was 63 minutes, and the fuel endurance of the aircraft was 250 minutes. The terminal forecast for Warrnambool initially obtained by the pilot indicated that the cloud on his arrival would be 6 oktas of stratus at 1000 feet but, while he was at the Briefing Office, an amended forecast was received, and a copy given to him, which indicated that the cloud was now expected to be 6 oktas of stratus at 800 feet. The surface visibility was forecast to be 10 km or more. The end of daylight at Warrnambool was at 1915 hours.

After departing from Moorabbin, the pilot established radio communication with Melbourne Flight Service Unit (FSU). He reported his position at 1826 hours as abeam Colac, altitude 4000 feet and estimated time of arrival at Warrnambool as 1849 hours. He was advised at this time that reports had been received of deteriorating weather in the Warrnambool area and he acknowledged this information. At 1845 hours the pilot made a general radio broadcast that he was 'one zero miles east, inbound' and he then reported that he was 'leaving four thousand on descent into Warrnambool.' At 1850 hours, following a query from Melbourne FSU as to whether he had arrived at Warrnambool, the pilot advised 'circuit area Warrnambool this time - I'll be holding in the area for up to one zero minutes due to cloud - there's a break out to the west - if it doesn't uncover I'll go up to Hamilton'. When asked to confirm that he was in VMC at that time, the pilot replied 'affirmative'. No further communications were received from the aircraft.

A shallow south-east wind flow existed over central and western Victoria ahead of a weak cold front which extended from Tasmania to Mt. Gambier. Although there were light south-easterly winds ahead of the front, the winds at 2000 feet and above were light to moderate south-westerlies. During the afternoon, low stratus cloud and drizzle moved over Warrnambool from the south. At the time of the accident, there was overcast cloud with a base of 100 to 200 feet, the surface visibility was some 400 to 800 metres in drizzle, and the wind was southerly at about 10 knots.

6. RELEVANT EVENTS (Cont'd)

Shortly before the accident, the sound of an aircraft engine was heard over the Warrnambool aerodrome and the aircraft was apparently heading to the south. Some two minutes later, the engine noise was heard approaching the aerodrome from the south-west. The noise decreased and increased several times before it increased dramatically to a high pitch. An impact noise was then heard and the engine noise ceased.

The aircraft struck the ground in an open field at high speed in a steep nose down attitude. There was no fire. Detailed examination of the wreckage did not reveal evidence of any defect or malfunction which might have contributed to the accident.

7. OPINION AS TO CAUSE

The probable cause of the accident was that the pilot persisted with an approach for landing in adverse weather conditions during which he lost control of the aircraft for reasons which could not be determined.

Approved for publication	 (G. V. Hughes) Delegate of the Secretary	Date 11.9.1980
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