



AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION SUMMARY REPORT

Reference No.

V116/783/1047

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

1. LOCATION OF OCCURRENCE

Not known	Height a.m.s.l. -	Date 21.10.78	Time (Local) Not known	Zone EST
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2. THE AIRCRAFT

Make and Model Cessna 182L	Registration VH-DSJ	Certificate of Airworthiness Valid from 14 February 1968
Certificate of Registration issued to	Operator	Degree of damage to aircraft Not known
		Other property damaged
Defects discovered		

3. THE FLIGHT

Last or intended departure point Moorabbin	Time of departure 1819 hours	Next point of intended landing King Island	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	20	Private	Not known	150 (Approx.)	Presumed Fatal

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

Name	Status	Degree of injury	Name	Status	Degree of injury

6. RELEVANT EVENTS

The pilot obtained a Class Four instrument rating on 11 May 1978 and he was therefore authorised to operate at night in visual meteorological conditions (VMC). On the afternoon of 21 October 1978 he attended the Moorabbin Briefing Office, obtained a meteorological briefing and, at 1723 hours, submitted a flight plan for a night VMC flight from Moorabbin to King Island and return. The cruising altitude nominated in the flight plan was below 5000 feet, with estimated time intervals of 41 minutes to Cape Otway and 28 minutes from Cape Otway to King Island. The total fuel endurance was shown as 300 minutes. The pilot made no arrangements for aerodrome lighting to be illuminated for his arrival at King Island. He advised the briefing officer and the operator's representative that he was uplifting friends at King Island and took four life jackets in the aircraft with him.

The aircraft was refuelled to capacity at 1810 hours and departed Moorabbin at 1819 hours. After departure the pilot established two-way radio communications with Melbourne Flight Service Unit (FSU).

The pilot reported Cape Otway at 1900 hours and the next transmission received from the aircraft was at 1906:14 hours. The following communications between the aircraft and Melbourne FSU were recorded from this time: (Note: The word/words in brackets are open to other interpretations.)

TIME	FROM	TEXT
1906:14	VH-DSJ	MELBOURNE this is DELTA SIERRA JULIET is there any known traffic below five thousand
:23	FSU	DELTA SIERRA JULIET no known traffic
:26	VH-DSJ	DELTA SIERRA JULIET I am seems (to) be a large aircraft below five thousand

6. RELEVANT EVENTS (cont'd)

TIME	FROM	TEXT
:46	FSU	D D DELTA SIERRA JULIET what type of aircraft is it
:50	VH-DSJ	DELTA SIERRA JULIET I cannot affirm it is four bright it seems to me like landing lights
1907:04	FSU	DELTA SIERRA JULIET
:32	VH-DSJ	MELBOURNE this (is) DELTA SIERRA JULIET the aircraft has just passed over over me at least a thousand feet above
:43	FSU	DELTA SIERRA JULIET roger and it it is a large aircraft confirm
:47	VH-DSJ	er unknown due to the speed it's travelling is there any airforce aircraft in the vicinity
:57	FSU	DELTA SIERRA JULIET no known aircraft in the vicinity
1908:18	VH-DSJ	MELBOURNE it's approaching now from due east towards me
:28	FSU	DELTA SIERRA JULIET
:42		// open microphone for two seconds //
:49	VH-DSJ	DELTA SIERRA JULIET it seems to me that he's playing some sort of game he's flying over me two three times at a time at speeds I could not identify
1909:02	FSU	DELTA SIERRA JULIET roger what is your actual level
:06	VH-DSJ	my level is four and a half thousand four five zero zero
:11	FSU	DELTA SIERRA JULIET and confirm you cannot identify the aircraft
:14	VH-DSJ	affirmative
:18	FSU	DELTA SIERRA JULIET roger standby
:28	VH-DSJ	MELBOURNE DELTA SIERRA JULIET it's not an aircraft it is // open microphone for two seconds //
:46	FSU	DELTA SIERRA JULIET MELBOURNE can you describe the er aircraft
1909:52	VH-DSJ	DELTA SIERRA JULIET as it's flying past it's a long shape // open microphone for three seconds // (cannot) identify more than (that it has such speed) // open microphone for 3 seconds // before me right now Melbourne
1910:07	FSU	DELTA SIERRA JULIET roger and how large would the er object be
:20	VH-DSJ	DELTA SIERRA JULIET MELBOURNE it seems like it's stationary what I'm doing right now is orbiting and the thing is just orbiting on top of me also it's got a green light and sort of metallic (like) it's all shiny (on) the outside
:43	FSU	DELTA SIERRA JULIET

6. RELEVANT EVENTS (cont'd)

TIME	FROM	TEXT
:48	VH-DSJ	DELTA SIERRA JULIET // open microphone for 5 seconds // it's just vanished
:57	FSU	DELTA SIERRA JULIET
1911:03	VH-DSJ	MELBOURNE would you know what kind of aircraft I've got is it (a type) military aircraft
:08	FSU	DELTA SIERRA JULIET confirm the er aircraft just vanished
:14	VH-DSJ	SAY AGAIN
:17	FSU	DELTA SIERRA JULIET is the aircraft still with you
:23	VH-DSJ	DELTA SIERRA JULIET (it's ah nor) // open microphone 2 seconds // (now) approaching from the southwest
:37	FSU	DELTA SIERRA JULIET
:52	VH-DSJ	DELTA SIERRA JULIET the engine is is rough idling I've got it set at twenty three twenty four and the thing is (coughing)
1912:04	FSU	DELTA SIERRA JULIET roger what are your intentions
:09	VH-DSJ	my intentions are ah to go to King Island ah Melbourne that strange aircraft is hovering on top of me again // two seconds open microphone // it is hovering and it's not an aircraft
:22	FSU	DELTA SIERRA JULIET
:28	VH-DSJ	DELTA SIERRA JULIET MELBOURNE // 17 seconds open microphone //
:49	FSU	DELTA SIERRA JULIET MELBOURNE

There is no record of any further transmissions from the aircraft.

The weather in the Cape Otway area was clear with a trace of stratocumulus cloud at 5000 to 7000 feet, scattered cirrus cloud at 30000 feet, excellent visibility and light winds. The end of daylight at Cape Otway was at 1918 hours.

The Alert Phase of SAR procedures was declared at 1912 hours and, at 1933 hours when the aircraft did not arrive at King Island, the Distress Phase was declared and search action was commenced. An intensive air, sea and land search was continued until 25 October 1978, but no trace of the aircraft was found.

7. OPINION AS TO CAUSE

The reason for the disappearance of the aircraft has not been determined.

Approved for
publication

A. R. Woodward

(A. R. Woodward)
Delegate of the Secretary

Date

27.4.1982