



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/784/1017

1. LOCATION OF OCCURRENCE

11 km south-south-west of Port Augusta, South Australia	Height a.m.s.l. 160 feet	Date 12.5.78	Time (Local) 1357 hours	Zone CST
---	-----------------------------	-----------------	----------------------------	-------------

2. THE AIRCRAFT

Make and Model Cessna 172N	Registration VH-CGL	Certificate of Airworthiness Valid from 20.1.78
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 Woomera	Time of departure 1255 hours	Next point of intended landing Port Pirie	Purpose of flight Travel	Class of operation Private
---	---------------------------------	--	-----------------------------	-------------------------------

4. THE CREW

Name	Status	Age	Class of licence	Hours on type	Total hours	Degree of injury
	Pilot	55	Private	65	120	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 telephoned the Parafield Briefing Office at 1153 hours and obtained the meteorological forecasts relevant to a flight from Woomera to Parafield. The forecasts indicated that, in the area covering the Woomera to Port Augusta sector, there would be scattered to broken stratus, strato-cumulus and cumulus cloud and visibility would be generally 40 km, deteriorating to 10 km in rain showers and 4000 metres in drizzle. The forecast for the area south of Port Augusta was similar.

At 1210 hours the pilot again telephoned the Parafield Briefing Office and gave details of his flight plan, indicating that a landing would be made at Port Pirie where the aircraft would be refuelled. He did not hold an instrument rating and was therefore restricted to flight in accordance with the Visual Flight Rules (VFR). He was advised that Parafield was closed to VFR operations at that time and that 30 minutes holding fuel was required for future arrivals because of low cloud and reduced visibility. The pilot indicated that he would check the Parafield weather situation again when he departed Port Pirie.

The aircraft departed Woomera at 1255 hours and, some 8 minutes later, the pilot established satisfactory radio communication on the frequency 6610 KHz with Adelaide Flight Service Unit (FSU). At 1313 hours he reported position at Pernatty West. At 1344 hours he made a general broadcast indicating that he was 5 miles north-west of Port Augusta and, at 1348 hours, reported his position as Port Augusta, cruising below 5000 feet, and estimating arrival at Port Pirie at 1418 hours. On request, he then established communication with Adelaide FSU on the appropriate very high radio frequency (VHF).

At about this time at the Port Augusta aerodrome there was overcast strato cumulus cloud, base approximately 2000 feet, and to the south there was a line of drizzle and associated stratus cloud lying east/west and moving north. The hills to the south of the aerodrome were covered in mist and stratus cloud. Similar weather conditions were observed by two persons fishing from a boat situated at the head of Spencer Gulf some 10 km south of Port Augusta. The fishermen heard a single-engined aircraft approach from the north and intermittently observed it through breaks in the low overcast. It made several turns in their vicinity and then headed towards the hills to the west. The engine noise then increased and they finally observed what appeared to be the wing of an aircraft bounce into the air from the ground. The engine noise stopped suddenly at that time.

6. RELEVANT EVENTS (CONT'D)

At 1357 hours the call sign of the aircraft "Charlie Golf Lima" was heard on the Adelaide FSU VHF frequency and the voice was shrill and urgent. Calls to the aircraft did not produce any response and search and rescue alerting action was initiated. The wreckage of VH-CGL was located by a searching aircraft at 1550 hours.

Detailed examination of the wreckage did not reveal evidence of any defect or malfunction which might have contributed to the accident. The damage to the aircraft, together with ground impact marks, indicated that the aircraft struck the ground at high speed in a steep nose-down, right wing-down attitude.

7. OPINION AS TO CAUSE

The probable cause of the accident was that the pilot flew into weather conditions in which he was not able to maintain the visual reference necessary for him to retain control of the aircraft.

Approved for
publication

G. V. Hughes

(G. V. Hughes)
Delegate of the Secretary

Date

25.3.1980

DEFINITIONS

ACCIDENT - An occurrence associated with the operation of an aircraft which takes place between the time any person boards the aircraft with the intention of flight until such time as all those persons have disembarked and in which

- (a) any person suffers death or serious injury as a result of being in or upon the aircraft or by direct contact with the aircraft or anything attached to the aircraft; or

Note. - Specifically excluded are: death from natural causes and fatal or serious injury to any person on board whether self-inflicted or inflicted by another person, or to ground support personnel before or after flight, or fatal or serious injury which is not a direct result of the operation of the aircraft, or which concerns stowaways.

- (b) the aircraft suffers substantial damage or is destroyed; or
- (c) the aircraft is missing or is completely inaccessible.

FATAL INJURY - Any injury which results in death within 30 days.

SERIOUS INJURY - Any injury other than a fatal injury which

- (a) requires hospitalisation for more than 48 hours, commencing within seven days from the date the injury was received; or
- (b) results in a fracture of any bone (except simple fractures of fingers, toes or nose); or
- (c) involves lacerations which cause severe haemorrhages, nerve, muscle or tendon damage; or
- (d) involves injury to any internal organ; or
- (e) involves second or third degree burns, or any burns affecting more than five percent of the body surface.

MINOR INJURY - Any injury other than as defined under "Fatal Injury" or "Serious Injury".

DESTROYED - Consumed by fire, demolished or damaged beyond repair.

SUBSTANTIAL DAMAGE - Damage or structural failure which adversely affects the structural strength, performance or flight characteristics of the aircraft and which would normally require major repair or replacement of the affected component. The following types of damage are specifically excluded: engine failure; damage limited to an engine or its accessories, or to propeller blades; bent fairings or cowlings; small dents or puncture holes in the skin; damage to wing tips, antennas, tires, or brakes.

MINOR DAMAGE - Damage other than as defined under "Destroyed" or "Substantial Damage".