

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA-BUREAU OF AIR SAFETY INVESTIGATION AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION SUMMARY REPORT	REFERENCE NO. SI/802/1064
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1. LOCATION OF OCCURRENCE

2 km northwest of Come-By-Chance, N.S.W.		Elevation: 450 feet
Date: 21.10.80	Time: 1115 hours	Zone: EST

2. THE AIRCRAFT

Make and Model: Cessna 182P	Registration: VH-TTK
Certificate of Airworthiness: Issued on 12.6.75	
Certificate of Registration Issued to: Walgett Aero Club Ltd., Walgett Aerodrome, N.S.W.	Operator: Walgett Aero Club Ltd., Walgett Aerodrome, N.S.W.
Degree of Damage to Aircraft: Destroyed	Other Property Damaged: Power line
Defects discovered: Nil	

3. THE FLIGHT

Departure Point: Walgett	Time of departure: 1030 hours
Destination: Walgett	
Purpose of flight: Power lines inspection	Class of Operation: Aerial Work

4. THE CREW

Name	Status	Age	Class of Licence	Hours on Type	Total Hours	Degree of Injury
████████████████████	Pilot	22	Commercial	121	335	Fatal
████████████████████	Observer	41	-	-	-	Fatal

5. OTHER PERSONS (ALL PASSENGERS AND PERSONS INJURED ON GROUND)

Name	Status	Degree of Injury
████████████████████	Passenger	Fatal

6. RELEVANT EVENTS

The operator had received approval to carry out certain low level operations, including power line inspections, during nominated periods of emergency. The approval was subject to a number of conditions, which included requirements that such flights be authorised by the State Emergency Services and that only persons essential to the operation be carried. As suitably qualified commercial pilots were not normally available, two private pilot members of the aero club who had more than 1000 hours flying experience had been specifically approved to conduct these flights. Before receiving this approval, the pilots had been required to complete specialised low flying training and testing. The procedure used in conducting power line inspection flights was to fly at approximately 200 feet above ground level, maintaining about 90 knots airspeed with one or two stages of flap lowered and with the aircraft tracking left of the line to assist inspection by the observer in the right seat.

On 20.10.80, storms caused damage to power lines in the Walgett area but an emergency situation was not nominated by the State Emergency Services. At about 0700 hours on 21.10.80, Mr [REDACTED], District Superintendent for the Namoi Valley County Council, contacted the two approved pilots to arrange aerial inspections of the damaged lines. The proposed flights were not authorised by the State Emergency Services. Both pilots had other commitments and one of them suggested Mr [REDACTED] approach Mr [REDACTED], a commercial pilot who had recently been employed by the aero club. The approved pilot then proceeded to the aerodrome parking area where he met Mr [REDACTED], who was about to depart on a flight in a Cessna 172 aircraft to Tamworth with Mr [REDACTED]. He informed Mr [REDACTED] of Mr [REDACTED]'s request and advised him not to go below 300 feet above ground level. Although Mr [REDACTED] was not approved to carry out low flying operations, he contacted Mr [REDACTED] and undertook to make the inspection flights. He also invited Mr [REDACTED] to accompany him as a passenger.

The first inspection flight was completed by 1000 hours. Mr [REDACTED] then briefed a ground party regarding the power lines to be inspected on the second flight, in the vicinity of Come-By-Chance. The aircraft again departed and was observed shortly afterwards to overfly Come-By-Chance, following a power line to the south, at a height of approximately 100 feet. At about 1115 hours the aircraft was again sighted, approaching Come-By-Chance from the south at a height of about 30 feet. Over the township the aircraft made a climbing turn to the left and then descended back to about 30 feet. It straightened on to a northwesterly course, following the power line and road towards Walgett. It was flying faster than normal for a power line inspection.

The main power line was located on the left side of the road and telephone lines followed the right side. Approximately 2 km from Come-By-Chance, a spur power line branched from the main line, towards the northeast. The first pole on this spur line was adjacent to the telephone lines and not readily distinguishable from the telephone poles. The line, which was dull grey in colour and blended into the background, crossed the road at a height of approximately 25 feet.

The aircraft struck the spur line with its propeller and nose gear. The line did not break and the aircraft was pitched vertically to the ground. It then bounced 16 metres and came to rest inverted at the side of the road. An intense fire broke out and consumed much of

6. RELEVANT EVENTS (Cont)

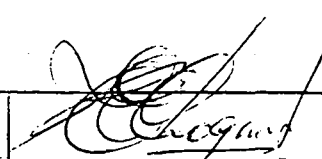
the wreckage. The pilot was thrown out and was still conscious when witnesses reached the scene. His comments suggested he was not aware that the aircraft had struck a power line.

Examination of the wreckage found no evidence of mechanical defect or malfunction which might have contributed to the accident.

7. OPINION AS TO CAUSE

The cause of the accident was that the aircraft was operated at an unnecessarily low height.

Approved for publication under the
provisions of Air Navigation
Regulation 283(1)


(P.E. Choquenot) Director

Date:

12.4.83