

1. LOCATION OF OCCURRENCE

Nine miles south west of Camden, New South Wales	Height a.m.s.l. (ft) 950 feet	Date 21.2.71	Time (Local) 1530	Zone EST
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2. THE AIRCRAFT

Make and Model Cessna 172D	Registration VH-IAG
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3. CONCLUSIONS

(i) At about 1530 hours EST on the twenty-first of February, 1972, a parachutist was drowned in a dam following a static line parachute descent.

(ii) The student parachutist, Patricia Williams, was making her first jump and was under the supervision of the Sydney Parachute Group, which had conducted her training. Initial training was done under the supervision of Roger Gregory Marks, the Senior Instructor, on the afternoon of the day before the accident, and final pre-jump training was conducted by Colin William Hunt on the day of the accident. The training included instruction in the techniques of aircraft exits, canopy control, and landing procedure.

(iii) The parachutist was equipped with a 28 foot diameter main parachute and a 24 foot diameter reserve parachute. For this descent the main parachute was to be operated by means of a static line and the reserve was equipped with a hand operated ripcord. No defect was discovered in either parachute, the harness, or any of the release mechanisms, which might have contributed to the accident.

(iv) Two rear panels of the main parachute had been modified to provide "L" shaped slot apertures. These apertures give the parachutist a forward speed of about 5 knots during the descent and by manipulating steering lines controlling the apertures the parachutist may make turns in either direction.

(v) The Dropping Zone was free from significant obstructions in accordance with Air Navigation Order 29.1.6(b). There was no cloud in the area below the dropping height and the surface wind was from ENE at a speed of about 5 knots.

(vi) The descent, on which the accident occurred, was made from a Cessna 172D aircraft registered VH-IAG, owned by Air Training Proprietary Limited and flown by John Terence Barnicle the holder of a private pilot licence. Also on board the aircraft was the jumpmaster, John Anthony Bowles, and two parachutists, Patricia Williams and Helen Lorraine Monks, both of whom were to make their first descents.

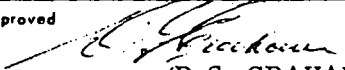
(vii) At a height of about 2,500 feet above the Dropping Zone Patricia Williams, the first parachutist to jump, exited the aircraft cleanly and the main parachute canopy deployed normally. She was observed to make a 360 degree turn in one direction followed by a 180 degree turn in the other, stopping the turn with her back to the wind. She then appeared to adopt the parachute landing fall position and seemed to maintain this posture, drifting with the wind, until she disappeared from the view of an observer on the Dropping Zone. About 1700 yards SSW of the Dropping Zone landing marker she descended into a dam of irregular shape approximately 2 acres

CONCLUSIONS (Cont'd)

in area and 30 feet deep at the point of entry. The descent into the dam was witnessed by the property manager and his young son. The son, who was the only one who could swim, entered the water and attempted to rescue the parachutist by pulling on the canopy which was floating on the surface, but was unable to do so. When later recovered the parachutist was found to be still firmly attached in the parachute harness.

4. OPINION AS TO CAUSE

The probable cause of the accident was that the parachutist who was inexperienced, did not control the parachute so as to ensure that her descent was confined to the dropping zone and the measures adopted for control from the ground of the descent were inadequate to correct her error.

Release approved  (D. S. GRAHAM)	Designation Assistant Director-General (Air Safety Investigation)	Date 8.5.72
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