



GOVERNMENT OF AUSTRALIA

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT

Reference No.

AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION SUMMARY REPORT

AS/752/1032

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

1. LOCATION OF OCCURRENCE

● kilometres north-west of Scone, New South Wales	Height a.m.s.l. 2650 feet	Date 14. 6. 75	Time (Local) 0734 hours	Zone EST
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2. THE AIRCRAFT

Make and Model Piper PA28/235 'Cherokee'	Registration VH-WIK	Certificate of Airworthiness Valid from 12. 2. 74
Certificate of Registration issued to R. W. Brumpton, P. O. Box 5, Aberdeen, New South Wales.	Operator P. W. Hughes, 20 Chapman Street, Charlestown, New South Wales.	Degree of damage to aircraft Substantial
		Other property damaged Nil
Defects discovered Nil		

3. THE FLIGHT

Last or intended departure point Scone	Time of departure 0710 hours	Next point of intended landing Charleville	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
Phillip William HUGHES	Pilot	35	Private	80	213	Fatal

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

Name	Status	Degree of injury	Name	Status	Degree of injury
Merrill Anne HUGHES	Passenger	Fatal	Murray HUGHES	Passenger	Nil
Wynne HUGHES	Passenger	Nil			

6. RELEVANT EVENTS

The pilot intended to proceed from Scone to Mount Isa, with an intermediate landing at Charleville and, at about 0400 hours, he obtained the appropriate area meteorological forecasts by telephone. The forecasts indicated low cloud down to ground level in the mountainous areas near Scone but improving conditions further north. The pilot did not hold any instrument rating and was therefore restricted to flight under the Visual Flight Rules.

At about 0630 hours he arrived at Scone aerodrome and, with assistance, prepared the aircraft for flight. Three mining machinery wheels, each weighing 63.5 kg., were to be carried on the flight and two were placed in foot wells in front of the rear passenger seats. The third wheel was placed in the luggage compartment behind the rear seats and was secured to the frame of the seats by rope. The pilot telephoned the briefing office at Bankstown and submitted details of the flight plan which he had prepared.

The aircraft took off from Scone at about 0710 hours but radio communication was not established with any Airways Operations Unit. There was extensive low cloud in the area at this time. At about 0730 hours an aircraft was heard circling on the southern side of the Liverpool Range in the Wybong Valley. It was observed to be at a very low level in conditions of reduced visibility and extensive low cloud. Shortly afterwards it went out of sight and a crashing noise was heard. At 0733 hours the pilot of an aircraft operating in the area at 9000 feet had heard an unidentified 'Mayday' radio call. A ground search was immediately commenced but was initially hampered by cloud at ground level and an aerial search was commenced when the cloud began to break. At about 1330 hours the surviving passengers, aged nine and six years, were found by a member of a ground party and at 1425 hours the wreckage of VH-WIK was located by a searching aircraft.

Examination of the wreckage disclosed no evidence of any defect or malfunction which may have contributed to the accident. The aircraft had struck a densely timbered slope whilst turning away from rising ground and it had come to rest in an upright attitude. The machinery wheel from the luggage compartment had broken free on impact and had struck the occupants of the front seats. The survivors confirmed that the visibility from the aircraft had been restricted by 'fog' and the pilot had made a 'Mayday' call just prior to the accident.

OPINION AS TO CAUSE

The cause of the accident was that the aircraft was operated in weather conditions in which the pilot was not able to maintain the visual reference necessary to ensure adequate terrain clearance.

Approved for
publication(I. M. Leslie)
Delegate of the Secretary

Date

9. 2. 1976