



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT

AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION SUMMARY REPORT

Reference No.

SI/761/1026

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

1. LOCATION OF OCCURRENCE

| | | | | |
|--|-----------------------------|-----------------|----------------------------|-------------|
| 12 Km west of Gamboola Station, Queensland | Height a.m.s.l. 350 feet | Date 15.7.76 | Time (Local) 1526 hours | Zone EST |
|--|-----------------------------|-----------------|----------------------------|-------------|

2. THE AIRCRAFT

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| Make and Model Beech 36 | Registration VH-WLP | Certificate of Airworthiness Valid from 1.8.68 |
| Certificate of Registration issued to J. L. Newton, 4 Vaughan Street, Mareeba, Queensland | Operator North Queensland Aerial Charter and Training Pty. Ltd. 4 Vaughan Street, Mareeba, Qld. | Degree of damage to aircraft Destroyed Other property damaged - |
| Defects discovered The Continental 10-520-B engine, serial number 121803-8-B, broke up following progressive fatigue cracking in the left crankcase assembly. | | |

3. THE FLIGHT

| | | | | |
|---|---------------------------------|--|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Last or intended departure point Mareeba | Time of departure 1430 hours | Next point of intended landing Dunbar | Purpose of flight Positioning | Class of operation Charter |
|---|---------------------------------|--|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|

4. THE CREW

| Name | Status | Age | Class of licence | Hours on type | Total hours | Degree of injury |
|---------------------|--------|-----|------------------|---------------|-------------|------------------|
| James Robert FRIEND | Pilot | 29 | Commercial | 154 | 2374 | Fatal |

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

| Name | Status | Degree of injury | Name | Status | Degree of injury |
|------|--------|------------------|------|--------|------------------|
| | | | | | |


6. RELEVANT EVENTS

On the day of the accident the pilot commenced operations in VH-WLP at about 0630 hours and completed two flights from Mareeba to Kowanyama and return. He then refuelled the aircraft, probably to capacity, adding 184 litres of fuel. The aircraft departed from Mareeba bound for Dunbar at 1430 hours. No passengers or freight were carried and it was intended to uplift five passengers at Dunbar for return to Mareeba. Weather conditions over the route were fine. At 1513 hours the pilot established high frequency radio communications with Weipa Flight Service Unit and reported that his position at 1510 hours was abeam Gamboola, altitude below 5000 feet and estimated arrival time at Dunbar was 1539 hours. Radio communications in the area were adversely affected by ionospheric conditions. At 1520 hours the pilot advised 'returning to Gamboola, estimating Gamboola three zero, have a suspected broken exhaust pipe'. Following a request from Weipa he advised that 'operations normal this time' and 'suspect that I have a broken exhaust pipe by vibration and engine no other indications.' The next communication from the pilot was at 1525 hours when he broadcast 'mayday mayday mayday, whisky lima papa, five miles closing down engine failure partial engine failure.' At 1526 hours the last transmission received from the aircraft was 'whisky lima papa I'm ah all but there to Gamboola five miles short I'm going to have to put down.'

The aircraft struck the ground in a steep right wing down, nose down attitude and was virtually destroyed by impact forces and fire. Wreckage of the aircraft was distributed over an area some 100 metres square. An extensive bush fire occurred in the area surrounding the wreckage. The terrain in which the accident occurred was relatively level and clear; it was possible for a successful forced landing to be carried out in the area. A detailed examination of the wreckage was carried out but was severely restricted by the extent of destruction. Nevertheless it was established that, at impact, the flap actuators were in the retracted position and the landing gear was probably retracted. The left crankcase assembly of the engine had failed following progressive fatigue cracking adjacent to the No. 2 and No. 4 cylinder attachment stud holes and this resulted in a catastrophic break-up of the engine.

7. OPINION AS TO CAUSE

The cause of the accident was engine failure resulting in a complete loss of engine power followed by a loss of control. The circumstances which immediately preceded the loss of control have not been established.

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| Approved for publication |  (G. V. Hughes) Delegate of the Secretary | Date 15.12.78 |
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