

1. LOCATION OF OCCURRENCE

Property of R. Swanbra, 8 miles east of Wee Waa, N.S.W.	Height a.m.s.l. (ft) 600 feet	Date 19.2.69	Time (Local) 1910	Zone EST
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2. THE AIRCRAFT

Make and Model Piper PA25-235 "Pawnee"	Registration VH-TND	Certificate of Airworthiness	Valid from 21.3.67	Valid to 12.10.74
Registered Owner Nicholson's Air Services Pty. Ltd., P.O. Box 85, Toowong, QLD.	Operator Nicholson's Air Services Pty. Ltd., P.O. Box 91, Wee Waa, N.S.W.	Degree of damage to aircraft Substantial		
Defects discovered		Other property damaged Cotton Crop		

3. THE FLIGHT

Last or intended departure point Wee Waa	Time of departure 1900	Next point of intended landing Departure Point	Purpose of flight Agricultural Spraying	Class of operation Aerial Work
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4. THE CREW

Name	Status	Age	Class of licence	Hours on type	Total hours	Degree of injury
Cecil Arthur SWIFT	Pilot	32	Commercial	1000 hours	7000 hours	Nil

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

Name	Status	Degree of injury	Name	Status	Degree of injury

6. CONTRAVENTIONS OF REGULATIONS AND ORDERS


Regulation or Order No.	Nature of contravention
A.N.R. 227 (1)	The aircraft took off at a weight which exceeded by 85 lbs. the maximum permissible all up weight as specified in the certificate of airworthiness.

RELEVANT EVENTS

The aircraft was engaged in spraying an insecticide solution on a maturing cotton crop varying in height from 2 feet to 4 feet 6 inches. Operations had begun one hour previously and were to continue into the night with the pilot making easterly and westerly runs working from south to north across the field. The wind was suitable for the operation being mainly light in strength and variable in direction, with an occasional gust to ten knots. Approximately three minutes before last light, with the work lights on, the pilot approached from the west for his third spraying run, over a tree 45 feet in height situated 120 feet back from the edge of the crop. He then descended to begin spraying but the descent was not arrested before the undercarriage entered the crop. Believing the aircraft might not come free from the crop the pilot reduced power to minimise the impact, but the drag on the aircraft decreased slightly and the pilot applied full power and dumped the load. The aircraft failed to accelerate and sank deeper into the crop, and the pilot again reduced power. The right wing caught in the crop and the aircraft skidded to the left still decelerating and came to rest pointing 140 degrees to the flight path with the undercarriage collapsed beneath it.

8. OPINION AS TO CAUSE

The cause of the accident was that, in lighting conditions requiring great care, the pilot misjudged his descent to spraying height.

Report approved 	Designation Assistant Director-General (Air Safety Investigation)	Date 19.6.1970
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