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Accident on C182L - Moorabbin Vic/King Island Tas - 21 October 1978 VH-DSJ



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT

ARCHIVES

OPENED 22 OCT 1981	FILE NUMBER		PART
CLOSED	m116	783	1047 2

ACCIDENT

MOORABBIN / KING ISLAND

ON

21-10-78

C 182 L

VH-DSS

Related Files
Shown Inside

Folio No.	Referred to	Date	CLEARED Initials	Folio No.	Referred to	Date	CLEARED Initials	Folio No.	Referred to	Date	CLEARED Initials
1	NFS	22/10	WJ		PA	25/10/81					
2	DBIG	29/10/81	R	F.	BDCS	24/10/81	28/10				
2	SIGA	26/10/81	PA	F	BMSL	24/10/81	28/10/81				
2	SIGT	6/11	P		PA						
FILE	SIG 3	4/11/81	PA		BIAC	7/13/88	A				
FILE	DSIG	30/12/81	L		PA						
6	DESPATCH	23/12/81	FW								
FILE	SIGT	1/12/82	R								
3	SIGT	6/1	P								
7	DESPATCH	7/1/82	PA								
FILE	DSIG	16/2	A								
17	AS(SU)	7/5	WJ								
16	ASIG	7/5	A								
24	DESP	10/5/82	OK								
f	SIGT	16/82	R								
FILE	SISC(F)	1/6	A								
FILE	P/A		R								
27		1/82	P								
	FILE FROM ARCHIVAL										
	CUS ODY										
	PLEASE RETURN PACKS TO REGISTRY AFTER COMPLETION OF ACTION										
FILE	DSIS	14/11	WJ								
16	PA	14/11	WJ								
F	BAFB	16/7/82	SM								
F	BAXO	10/7/80	PA 25/8								

ARCHIVAL ACTION			FILE NO.	PART
Review	/	/	m116	783
Retain Permanently			1047	2
Destroy			(date)	

TRANSCRIPT OF RECORDED COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN
CESSNA 182L AIRCRAFT VH-DSJ AND MELBOURNE
FLIGHT SERVICE BETWEEN 0853 HOURS AND 0913
HOURS GMT ON 21 OCTOBER 1978

LEGEND

DSJ	Cessna 182L aircraft VH-DSJ
FS	Melbourne Flight Service Unit
()	Word/s open to other interpretations
// //	Explanatory note or editorial insertion

TITLE	FROM	TO	TEXT
0853:30	FS	DSJ	DELTA SIERRA JULIET DO YOU WISH TO EXTEND YOUR SARTIME FOR YOUR ARRIVAL AT KING ISLAND
:38	DSJ	FS	// open microphone 2 seconds // DELTA SIERRA JULIET SAY AGAIN
:42	FS	DSJ	DELTA SIERRA JULIET YOURE HOLDING A SARTIME OF ZERO NINE THREE ZERO FOR YOUR ARRIVAL AT KING ISLAND ON TIME INTERVAL YOUR ESTIMATE IS ZERO NINE TWO EIGHT DYOU WOULD YOU LIKE TO EXTEND YOUR SARTIME
:54	DSJ	FS	DELTA SIERRA JULIET AFFIRMATIVE
:58	FS	DSJ	DELTA SIERRA JULIET ROGER MAKE IT ONE ZERO ZERO ZERO
0854:03	DSJ	FS	AFFIRMATIVE
:05	FS	DSJ	DELTA SIERRA JULIET
0900:29	DSJ	FS	MELBOURNE DELTA SIERRA JULIET CAPE OTWAY (DESCENDING FOR) KING ISLAND
:38	FS	DSJ	DELTA SIERRA JULIET
0906:14	DSJ	FS	MELBOURNE THIS IS DELTA SIERRA JULIET IS THERE ANY KNOWN TRAFFIC BELOW FIVE THOUSAND
:23	FS	DSJ	DELTA SIERRA JULIET NO KNOWN TRAFFIC
:26	DSJ	FS	DELTA SIERRA JULIET I AM SEEMS (TO) BE A LARGE AIRCRAFT BELOW FIVE THOUSAND
:46	FS	DSJ	D D DELTA SIERRA JULIET WHAT TYPE OF AIRCRAFT IS IT
:50	DSJ	FS	DELTA SIERRA JULIET I CANNOT AFFIRM IT IS FOUR BRIGHT IT SEEMS TO ME LIKE LANDING LIGHTS
0907:04	FS	DSJ	DELTA SIERRA JULIET
:32	DSJ	FS	MELBOURNE THIS (IS) DELTA SIERRA JULIET THE AIRCRAFT HAS JUST PASSED OVER OVER ME AT LEAST A THOUSAND FEET ABOVE
:43	FS	DSJ	DELTA SIERRA JULIET ROGER AND IT IT IS A LARGE AIRCRAFT CONFIRM
:47	DSJ	FS	ER UNKNOWN DUE TO THE SPEED ITS TRAVELLING IS THERE ANY AIRFORCE AIRCRAFT IN THE VICINITY
:57	FS	DSJ	DELTA SIERRA JULIET NO KNOWN AIRCRAFT IN THE VICINITY

TIME	FROM	TO	TEXT
0908:18	DSJ	FS	MELBOURNE ITS APPROACHING NOW FROM DUE EAST TOWARDS ME
:28	FS	DSJ	DELTA SIERRA JULIET
:42			// open microphone for two seconds //
:49	DSJ	FS	DELTA SIERRA JULIET IT SEEMS TO ME THAT HES PLAYING SOME SORT OF GAME HES FLYING OVER ME TWO THREE TIMES AT A TIME AT SPEEDS I COULD NOT IDENTIFY
0909:02	FS	DSJ	DELTA SIERRA JULIET ROGER WHAT IS YOUR ACTUAL LEVEL
:06	DSJ	FS	MY LEVEL IS FOUR AND A HALF THOUSAND FOUR FIVE ZERO ZERO
:11	FS	DSJ	DELTA SIERRA JULIET AND CONFIRM YOU CANNOT IDENTIFY THE AIRCRAFT
:14	DSJ	FS	AFFIRMATIVE
:18	FS	DSJ	DELTA SIERRA JULIET ROGER STANDBY
:28	DSJ	FS	MELBOURNE DELTA SIERRA JULIET ITS NOT AN AIRCRAFT IT IS // open microphone for two seconds //
:46	FS	DSJ	DELTA SIERRA JULIET MELBOURNE CAN YOU DESCRIBE THE ER AIRCRAFT
:52	DSJ	FS	DELTA SIERRA JULIET AS ITS FLYING PAST ITS A LONG SHAPE // open microphone for three seconds // (CANNOT) IDENTIFY MORE THAN (THAT IT HAS SUCH SPEED) // open microphone for 3 seconds // BEFORE ME RIGHT NOW MELBOURNE
0910:07	FS	DSJ	DELTA SIERRA JULIET ROGER AND HOW LARGE WOULD THE ER OBJECT BE
:20	DSJ	FS	DELTA SIERRA JULIET MELBOURNE IT SEEMS LIKE ITS STATIONARY. WHAT IM DOING RIGHT NOW IS ORBITING AND THE THING IS JUST ORBITING ON TOP OF ME ALSO ITS GOT A GREEN LIGHT AND SORT OF METALLIC (LIKE) ITS ALL SHINY (ON) THE OUTSIDE
:43	FS	DSJ	DELTA SIERRA JULIET
:48	DSJ	FS	DELTA SIERRA JULIET // open microphone for 5 seconds // ITS JUST VANISHED
:57	FS	DSJ	DELTA SIERRA JULIET
0911:03	DSJ	FS	MELBOURNE WOULD YOU KNOW WHAT KIND OF AIRCRAFT IVE GOT IS IT (A TYPE) MILITARY AIRCRAFT

TIME	FROM	TO	TEXT
:08	FS	DSJ	DELTA SIERRA JULIET CONFIRM THE ER AIRCRAFT JUST VANISHED
:14	DSJ	FS	SAY AGAIN
:17	FS	DSJ	DELTA SIERRA JULIET IS THE AIRCRAFT STILL WITH YOU
:23	DSJ	FS	DELTA SIERRA JULIET (ITS AH NOR) // open microphone 2 seconds // (NOW) APPROACHING FROM THE SOUTHWEST
:37	FS	DSJ	DELTA SIERRA JULIET
:52	DSJ	FS	DELTA SIERRA JULIET THE ENGINE IS IS ROUGH IDLING IVE GOT IT SET AT TWENTY THREE TWENTY FOUR AND THE THING IS (COUGHING)
0912:04	FS	DSJ	DELTA SIERRA JULIET ROGER WHAT ARE YOUR INTENTIONS
:09	DSJ	FS	MY INTENTIONS ARE AH TO GO TO KING ISLAND AH MELBOURNE THAT STRANGE AIRCRAFT IS HOVERING ON TOP OF ME AGAIN // two second open microphone // IT IS HOVERING AND ITS NOT AN AIRCRAFT
:22	FS	DSJ	DELTA SIERRA JULIET
:28	DSJ	FS	DELTA SIERRA JULIET MELBOURNE // 17 seconds open microphone //
:49	FS	DSJ	DELTA SIERRA JULIET MELBOURNE

- Cyril Lyon - Journalist -

ON Parade Mag 1984

Pr Dec issue.
(786 7363.)



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT
AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION SUMMARY REPORT

Publication of this report is authorised by the Secretary under the provisions of Air Navigation Regulations 263 (1)

Reference No.

V116/783/1047

1. LOCATION OF OCCURRENCE

Not known	Height a.m.s.l. -	Date 21.10.78	Time (Local) Not known	Zone EST
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2. THE AIRCRAFT

Make and Model Cessna 182L	Registration VH-DSJ	Certificate of Airworthiness Valid from 14 February 1968
Certificate of Registration issued to Cephus Day, 33 Reserve Road, Beaumaris, Victoria	Operator SAS Southern Air Services, Northern Avenue, Moorabbin Airport, Victoria	Degree of damage to aircraft Not known Other property damaged -
Defects discovered -		

3. THE FLIGHT

Last or intended departure point Moorabbin	Time of departure 1819 hours	Next point of intended landing King Island	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
Frederick VALENTICH	Pilot	20	Private	Not known	150 (Approx.)	Presumed Fatal

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

Name	Status	Degree of injury	Name	Status	Degree of injury

6. RELEVANT EVENTS

The pilot obtained a Class Four instrument rating on 11 May 1978 and he was therefore authorised to operate at night in visual meteorological conditions (VMC). On the afternoon of 21 October 1978 he attended the Moorabbin Briefing Office, obtained a meteorological briefing and, at 1723 hours, submitted a flight plan for a night VMC flight from Moorabbin to King Island and return. The cruising altitude nominated in the flight plan was below 5000 feet, with estimated time intervals of 41 minutes to Cape Otway and 28 minutes from Cape Otway to King Island. The total fuel endurance was shown as 300 minutes. The pilot made no arrangements for aerodrome lighting to be illuminated for his arrival at King Island. He advised the briefing officer and the operator's representative that he was uplifting friends at King Island and took four life jackets in the aircraft with him.

The aircraft was refuelled to capacity at 1810 hours and departed Moorabbin at 1819 hours. After departure the pilot established two-way radio communications with Melbourne Flight Service Unit (FSU).

The pilot reported Cape Otway at 1900 hours and the next transmission received from the aircraft was at 1906:14 hours. The following communications between the aircraft and Melbourne FSU were recorded from this time: (Note: The word/words in brackets are open to other interpretations.)

TIME	FROM	TEXT
1906:14	VH-DSJ	MELBOURNE this is DELTA SIERRA JULIET is there any known traffic below five thousand
:23	FSU	DELTA SIERRA JULIET no known traffic
:26	VH-DSJ	DELTA SIERRA JULIET I am seems (to) be a large aircraft below five thousand

6. RELEVANT EVENTS (cont'd)

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TIME	FROM	TEXT
:46	FSU	D D DELTA SIERRA JULIET what type of aircraft is it
:50	VH-DSJ	DELTA SIERRA JULIET I cannot affirm it is four bright it seems to me like landing lights
1907:04	FSU	DELTA SIERRA JULIET
:32	VH-DSJ	MELBOURNE this (is) DELTA SIERRA JULIET the aircraft has just passed over over me at least a thousand feet above
:43	FSU	DELTA SIERRA JULIET roger and it it is a large aircraft confirm
:47	VH-DSJ	er unknown due to the speed it's travelling is there any airforce aircraft in the vicinity
:57	FSU	DELTA SIERRA JULIET no known aircraft in the vicinity
1908:18	VH-DSJ	MELBOURNE it's approaching now from due east towards me
:28	FSU	DELTA SIERRA JULIET
:42		// open microphone for two seconds //
:49	VH-DSJ	DELTA SIERRA JULIET it seems to me that he's playing some sort of game he's flying over me two three times at a time at speeds I could not identify
1909:02	FSU	DELTA SIERRA JULIET roger what is your actual level
:06	VH-DSJ	my level is four and a half thousand four five zero zero
:11	FSU	DELTA SIERRA JULIET and confirm you cannot identify the aircraft
:14	VH-DSJ	affirmative
:18	FSU	DELTA SIERRA JULIET roger standby
:28	VH-DSJ	MELBOURNE DELTA SIERRA JULIET it's not an aircraft it is // open microphone for two seconds //
:46	FSU	DELTA SIERRA JULIET MELBOURNE can you describe the er aircraft
1909:52	VH-DSJ	DELTA SIERRA JULIET as it's flying past it's a long shape // open microphone for three seconds // (cannot) identify more than (that it has such speed) // open microphone for 3 seconds // before me right now Melbourne
1910:07	FSU	DELTA SIERRA JULIET roger and how large would the er object be
:20	VH-DSJ	DELTA SIERRA JULIET MELBOURNE it seems like it's stationary what I'm doing right now is orbiting and the thing is just orbiting on top of me also it's got a green light and sort of metallic (like) it's all shiny (on) the outside
:43	FSU	DELTA SIERRA JULIET

6. RELEVANT EVENTS (cont'd)

TIME	FROM	TEXT
:48	VH-DSJ	DELTA SIERRA JULIET // open microphone for 5 seconds // it's just vanished
:57	FSU	DELTA SIERRA JULIET
1911:03	VH-DSJ	MELBOURNE would you know what kind of aircraft I've got is it (a type) military aircraft
:08	FSU	DELTA SIERRA JULIET confirm the er aircraft just vanished
:14	VH-DSJ	SAY AGAIN
:17	FSU	DELTA SIERRA JULIET is the aircraft still with you
:23	VH-DSJ	DELTA SIERRA JULIET (it's ah nor) // open microphone 2 seconds // (now) approaching from the southwest
:37	FSU	DELTA SIERRA JULIET
:52	VH-DSJ	DELTA SIERRA JULIET the engine is is rough idling I've got it set at twenty three twenty four and the thing is (coughing)
1912:04	FSU	DELTA SIERRA JULIET roger what are your intentions
:09	VH-DSJ	my intentions are ah to go to King Island ah Melbourne that strange aircraft is hovering on top of me again // two seconds open microphone // it is hovering and it's not an aircraft
:22	FSU	DELTA SIERRA JULIET
:28	VH-DSJ	DELTA SIERRA JULIET MELBOURNE // 17 seconds open microphone //
:49	FSU	DELTA SIERRA JULIET MELBOURNE

There is no record of any further transmissions from the aircraft.

The weather in the Cape Otway area was clear with a trace of stratocumulus cloud at 5000 to 7000 feet, scattered cirrus cloud at 30000 feet, excellent visibility and light winds. The end of daylight at Cape Otway was at 1918 hours.

The Alert Phase of SAR procedures was declared at 1912 hours and, at 1933 hours when the aircraft did not arrive at King Island, the Distress Phase was declared and search action was commenced. An intensive air, sea and land search was continued until 25 October 1978, but no trace of the aircraft was found.

7. OPINION AS TO CAUSE

The reason for the disappearance of the aircraft has not been determined.

Approved for
publication

A.R. Woodward

(A. R. Woodward)
Delegate of the Secretary

Date

27.4.1982

BUREAU OF AIR SAFETY INVESTIGATION

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In reply quote M116/783/1047 (2)

TELEPHONE: (062) 68 4111
TELEX: 62221
POSTAL ADDRESS: G. P.O. BOX 367
CANBERRA ACT. 2601

Mr Francis Farvis
149 Condamine Street
BALGOWLAH NSW 2093

Dear Sir

I refer to your letter of 23 January 1988 concerning the disappearance of VH-DSJ in October 1978. I regret the delay in reply which has been due to the need to obtain the files from archives.

Enclosed is a copy of the Summary Report which will answer many of your questions. As far as this Bureau is aware no trace of the aircraft has been found so far.

Yours faithfully



J C HOPKINS
for Director

7 March 1988



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS

To Russell Sibbison
AST

G1

With Compliments

file requested
2/2/88

Think More in you ever
M. J. - Cohen
A/c P5585c.



Australia
1788-1988

Controller

6.783.1047

60

Mr. Francis Farvis

149 Candamine St.

Balgowlah NSW. 2093

23rd Jan. 1988

Federal Sea Safety and Surveillance Centre
(and Coastwatch)

Department of Transport
Trace Building

Northbourne Ave.

Canberra ACT.

Dear Sirs, etc.,

I wish to enquire please about the disappearance of a certain aeroplane and its pilot some years ago. I might not have written, except that an impression remaining with the public seemed bad, worth correcting; and the family of the still missing pilot was recently shown on TV (with that impression). Also it recently suddenly occurred to me that a plane that sinks in the sea can be found. Some methods might follow from basic physics, whether high-school or perhaps university physics.

But first may I ask please what has already been done or found in the search so far? Or to whom should I write, or who conducted the search? The pilot was Frederick Valentich, son of Guido Valentich, and he disappeared over Bass Strait on 21st October 1978, after leaving Melbourne in a Cessna 182 heading for King Island. It seems he was then about 20 years old and an instructor pilot in the Air Training Corps. This information (is it accurate?), and a transcript of the last six minutes or so of radio voice contact with the pilot as quoted from an Australian Department of Transport transcript, I read, not mostly from news reports at the time, but from a book which was published in 1978 and '79 (and probably also since), a book about which I have had slowly increasing concern over the years. Besides some aspects of the sociological and other contents of the book, I find myself generally unenthusiastic about and not in favour of flying saucers or UFO's (nor, if or if I may pun, flying sorcery or XFO's). The physics and engineering alleged seemed to have difficulties; but several aspects of behaviour and attitudes

are to be rejected. Desiring honour as appropriate for Government and Air Force, I wanted to see this case cleared up, rather than risk of what seemed false and accusation (including "VFO abduction" and worse) remain a prevailing belief of many. That is an introduction to the background for my enquiry.

Sincerely,
Francis Jarvis



MINUTE

~~29-58~~

Adelaide

12.8.82

Dear Alan,
I am enclosing the findings of
his friend, the former Regional Director of South Australia
who recently sought information from you on
the disappearance of VH-555 on 21.10.78.

Kind regards

Alex Ingorne

Mr. A.T. Brunt
4 Hyland Tce
Rosslyn Park
S.A. 5072
3rd August 1982

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Department of Transport,

Aircraft Accident Investigation

Your reference V116/783/1047 concerning the disappearance of Aircraft VH-DSJ over Bass Strait on 21/10/78.

My field of expertise is in the Meteorological area but I have had some experience in the investigation of what are reported as U.F.O. sightings. Hence my interest in this incident.

I know that the meteorological situation would have been routinely covered in the original accident investigation but I decided to reassess the situation with a view to checking on its suitability for meteorological optics, e.g. the bending of light rays.

I found as follows:-

Synoptic Situation 6 p.m. E.S.T. 21/10/78

There was a large high pressure area (central pressure approximately 1027 mbs) elongated N/S just off the N.S.W coast. There was a pronounced ridge of high pressure extending westwards from this through Victoria and the northern half of Bass Strait, reaching as far west as Adelaide and Ceduna.

Consistent with the location of this ridge, Laverton radiosonde flight at 9 p.m. 21/10/78 (the nearest available flight) showed a moderate subsidence inversion of 3 degrees C from approximately 7000ft to approx. 8000ft (see attached copy of temperature trace). This could have caused some bending of light rays such that any light source viewed through the inversion would be visible for a longer period than normal.

Flying conditions appeared to have been quite good with light winds, little cloud, excellent visibility and smooth seas.

The reported weather conditions, based on transmitted data and not on the original records, were as follows :-

<u>Location</u>	<u>Time (EST)</u>	<u>Wind</u>	<u>Cloud</u>	<u>Temp</u> (C)	<u>Vis.</u>	<u>Sea Conditions</u>
Cape Otway	6 p.m.	Calm	1/8Ci	17	good	smooth
Cape Otway	9 p.m.	N 10k	2/8 unspec.	12	good	-
Currie, King Is.	6 p.m.	NNW 2k	2/8 Ci	15	Excell.	-
Currie, King Is.	9 p.m.	N 1k	Nil	11	Excell.	-

The moon was not due to rise till about 11 p.m. on 21/10/78, so this would not have been a factor in any error in identification.

There have been cases where pilots have taken evasive action because of unidentified lights approaching on what appeared to be a collision course. The attached photo-copy of the Army Helicopter Incident, extracted from "U.F.O's Explained" by Philip J. Klass,, provides a good example. Although it did not result in an aircraft accident, it had the potential for one as the crew's evasive action brought the helicopter to within 400ft of the ground. Also, it involved

the sighting of a fireball-meteor for a period much less than the Bass Strait example. Nevertheless, it is similar in many ways, e.g. the metallic look which agrees with the "grey metallic structure" seen by the helicopter crew; also, the apparent hovering overhead.

Although the time spans are different, examination of the text of the communications between the aircraft and Melbourne FSU shows that the alleged U.F.O. was not visible continuously. It seems that there were three appearances :-

- (i) from about 1906 to 1907.30, then it "passed overhead".
- (ii) from about 1908.30 to 1910.30, then the pilot reported that "it just vanished".
- (iii) from 1912 onwards.

This type of sighting is consistent with a multiple meteor observation or a "meteor shower" with, not just one, but several phenomena in procession. The astronomical literature includes many of these cases.

There are also cases of meteors moving relatively slowly and being visible for minutes rather than seconds. For example:-

- (i) From "Remarkable Meteor" in English Mechanic 1868.
"A remarkable meteor was seen at the Radcliff Observatory at 9.50 p.m. The time it was visible must have been nearly four minutes"
- (ii) "The Remarkable Meteors of February 9, 1913" by W.F.Denning in Nature. "Mr W.W.Waddell, first mate of the S.S. Newlands saw a brilliant stream of meteors passing from NW TO SE during a period of six minutes."
- (iii) "The Meteoric Procession of February 9, 1913" by W.H.Pickering in Popular Astronomy. "It consisted of a procession of fireballs and meteors all moving very slowly in practically the same path across the sky."
- (iv) "The Lazy Meteor of April 7, 1934" by J.H.Pruett in Popular Astronomy. "The writer observed this meteor from Eugene. Its slowness bewildered him Many reported that the meteor was in sight fully a minute."
- (v) "Unusual Aerial Phenomena" by J.A.Hynek in Optical Society of America, Journal 1953. "on one night several airmen independently observed a light approach at a very slow speed, come to a halt nearly overhead and then reverse direction..... On 2 other nights, three other lights appeared in other sections of the sky, of similar appearance but manouvering more rapidly. They were observed for some 10 minutes by 9 airmen, including a control tower operator.. "

The point of quoting these examples is to show that sightings of 1½ or 2 minutes (or even longer) duration are not unknown.

From the evidence available, I am unable to rule out the possibility that the pilot of VH-DSJ was frightened by the appearance of one or more meteors and, fearing a collision, took evasive action or, being seriously distracted by the frightening phenomena, flew into the sea. The smooth sea surface would have been consistent with this, as a glassy surface at dusk provides no visual aid for height determination.

The main objection to this theory is that there were apparently no supporting witnesses who saw the astronomical phenomena. Yet evidence from many parts of the world shows that very few people are watching the skies at any one time and that major meteors have occurred without any reports from ground observers. (See postscript on page 411 of the photo-copied article on the Army Helicopter Incident).

When my job involved watching the skies, as a meteorologist on night shift, I calculated that I was really looking at the skies for only about 1% of the time. On this basis, I could have easily missed phenomena of a few minutes duration. I am of the opinion that 99.9% of the population would have been inside watching TV at 7 p.m. and it would be quite possible for there to be no supporting witnesses of a meteor or meteor shower, even one of a few minutes duration.

The only suggestion I can make is for a check with the astronomical people at one of the Melbourne Universities, or at Mt Stromlo, to see if they had any observations of unusual astronomical phenomena at that time.



(A.T. Brunt)

Formerly Regional Director,
Bureau of Meteorology,
South Australia.

Extract from "UFOs Explained"

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by Philip J. Klass

Vintage Books - A division of Random House, New York.

29 • Army Helicopter Incident: Best Case of 1973

The four-man crew of an Army helicopter, flying near Mansfield, Ohio, on the night of October 18, 1973, had a frightening encounter with a brightly glowing object moving at very high speed that seemed to threaten a mid-air collision. The incident, which occurred during the height of the UFO flap in Ohio, involved a Bell Helicopter Corporation UH-1H, operated by an Army Reserve crew that was returning to Cleveland from Columbus. The weather was clear, the helicopter was cruising at a speed of ninety knots (103 mph) on a heading of 30 degrees (northeast) at a barometric altitude of 2,500 feet. (This figure and other altitude figures are relative to mean sea level unless otherwise indicated, rather than indicating actual helicopter height above the terrain.) The pilot was Captain Lawrence Coyne, commanding officer of the Army Reserve's 316th medical detachment, based in Cleveland. Coyne described the incident when he appeared on the ABC Network's "Dick Cavett Show" on November 2, 1973. He supplied additional details when I talked with him later by telephone on several occasions.

It was several minutes past 11 P.M. local time when the crew chief spotted a bright red light to the east and

called it to Coyne's attention, suggesting that it might be an obstruction-warning light atop a TV antenna tower. The pilot told him to keep an eye on the light. The light seemed to maintain a constant bearing angle, which prompted the crew chief to conclude that it was flying a course parallel to the helicopter and "was pacing us," Coyne said. But soon the red light seemed to get larger and brighter, causing the crew chief to warn the pilot that the object seemed to be "converging on us on a collision course." Coyne said, "I looked to my right, through the right window, and I observed the light coming at a very fast speed, in excess of six hundred knots" (684 mph). The helicopter was not far from the Mansfield airport, where Coyne knew an Air National Guard detachment of F-100 jet fighters was based. Although aircraft are not supposed to fly at such high speed at low altitude, Coyne said he called the Mansfield control tower to ask if one of the F-100 jet fighters was approaching for a landing, but he received no reply.

The glowing red object was continuing to close toward the helicopter, and so Coyne decided to descend rapidly to avoid a possible mid-air collision. First he reduced the helicopter rotor's "collective pitch," which decreases lift, causing the helicopter to descend at a rate which Coyne told me was 1,000 feet per minute. When the object still seemed headed for the helicopter, the pilot also changed the rotor blades' "cyclic pitch," which put the aircraft into "about a twenty-degree angle of dive." This, he explained to me, increased the rate of descent to approximately 2,000 feet per minute. When Coyne last observed his barometric altimeter, he said, it read 1,700 feet, yet the glowing red object seemed still to be headed directly toward the helicopter, and so the pilot told the crew to "brace for impact."

It must certainly have been a moment of terror for the crew. Nothing is more frightening to an aircraft crew than the prospect of a mid-air collision, especially at night with an unknown craft whose crew shows no sign of taking evasive action to try to avoid the catastrophe. But there was no impact. Instead, as Coyne described events to Cavett, "We looked up and there was this object, right over us. Stopped! The best way I can describe the object is it was approximately fifty to sixty feet long, was about as big as our aircraft. The leading [front] edge of the craft was a bright-red light. The trailing edge had a green light, and you could delineate where the light stopped and the gray metallic structure [began]. You could see because there were reflections of the red and green off the structure itself. It—the trailing light on the aft end of the craft—swung about ninety degrees and came [shown down] on the helicopter . . . and flooded the cockpit with a green light."

"And this only existed two or three seconds," Coyne continued, "because we all saw the craft hovering over us, but it moved out of my field of vision and the co-pilot and flight medic [John Healey] still had visual contact with the craft." Coyne later estimated that the object had been only five hundred feet above the helicopter. As the co-pilot and flight medic on the left side of the helicopter watched, the glowing object headed west over the Mansfield airport, then appeared to turn northwest, with the green light turning to white. Then the object appeared to make a climbing turn and disappeared.

When Coyne next looked at his cockpit instruments, he said he was shocked to find that the barometric altimeter showed the helicopter to be at 3,500 feet and *climbing* at a rate of 1,000 feet per minute. As he ex-

plained on the Cavett show, "We were supposed to be going down, but we were going up!" When Cavett asked, "You were being sucked, or drawn, or magnetized, or what?" Coyne replied, "I really don't know. It was just a matter of seconds we were at 1,700 feet and then we were [at] 3,500 feet, climbing a thousand feet per minute, with no power—I mean the collective [pitch] was down and I was in a shallow dive." Another curious aspect of the UFO encounter, Coyne explained, was that the crew had "felt the G-forces [gravity forces] as we began *descending*, but we had *no feeling* of our climbing a thousand feet a minute until I observed the altimeter." (The forces to which Coyne referred are those familiar to airline passengers during a rapid climb or descent, or during turbulent air conditions.) Coyne was equally mystified by the fact that although the object had seemed to pass within five hundred feet of the small aircraft, "there was no turbulence, no vortex. There was no engine sound!"

Still another mysterious effect occurred when the copilot tried to make radio contact with the control towers at the Cleveland, Columbus, Akron-Canton and Mansfield airports to report the incident. Coyne said the copilot was *rapidly changing frequencies* in an effort to reach one of the control towers, but for several minutes after the UFO had passed over, no radio contact was established. Coyne said, "We were going through the radio panel [tuning] quite fast, and when you change frequencies you do hear the channeling tone, and the radio was functioning [in this respect] except that when you keyed the mike [pushed button to switch radio from receive-mode to transmit-mode], there was no keying sound, even though we transmitted." Cavett asked, "And that equipment was out of commission then?" Coyne replied, "No, the equipment was functioning, but we

just couldn't transmit or receive! We finally got ahold of Akron—on approach [control] about six to seven minutes later, but the keying sound was back again." (There are a number of UFO cases in which it is reported that the proximity of the UFO has caused a malfunction or blackout of radio equipment.)

Coyne described his experience on the same TV show in which Cavett interviewed Charles Hickson, one of the two Pascagoula shipyard workers, but Hickson appeared on a segment separate from Coyne. In some respects, Coyne's story seemed almost as incredible as Hickson's account of his abduction. But there was a very sharp contrast in the manner in which each man described his alleged experience. Hickson was as calm and casual in describing his abduction by two strange-looking space creatures as if he had been telling of a trip to a local drugstore, while Coyne's manner revealed that he was very distressed and puzzled by what he described. If I had grave doubts about Hickson's story, I was very much inclined to believe that Coyne and his crew had actually experienced the chilling encounter he described.

Captain Coyne and his crew, unlike the two Pascagoula shipyard workers, had not debated for several hours as to whether to report the incident for fear their story might not be believed. Shortly after Coyne landed at the Cleveland airport, he had reported the incident to Federal Aviation Administration officials there—as I subsequently confirmed in an interview with one of them. The report which the FAA tower supervisor wrote for his superior, after talking with Coyne, said that the pilot "sounded emotionally shaken. . . ." And the following day, Coyne had called an officer in the Air National Guard at the Mansfield airport to determine if one of the F-100 jet fighters based there might

have been the source for the incident. Coyne said the officer told him that all the jet aircraft had landed by 10:47 the previous night—more than fifteen minutes before the helicopter's UFO encounter.

I first learned of the Mansfield case on November 1 when I visited New York City to tape a TV show on UFOs for David Susskind. One of the other panelists was John Healey, the flight medic on the Army helicopter involved in the UFO incident. Healey's regular job is that of a detective with the Cleveland police department. When I learned from him that the pilot would appear on the Cavett show the next night, I made it a point to watch and to tape-record his account. As I studied the transcript of my tape recording, my attention began to focus on the *possibility* that the UFO might have been a bright meteor-fireball. If the glowing red object had indeed been a fireball, this would *not* explain why the helicopter apparently had ascended from 1,700 feet to 3,500 feet without any conscious action by the pilot, nor the apparent brief outage of the helicopter radio equipment. But my experience with several previous UFO cases, and especially the RB-47 incident (Chapter 19–20) had taught me that seemingly mysterious things that are reported to have occurred during a UFO sighting, with its attendant excitement, are not always directly related.

Captain Coyne and his crew had estimated that the UFO had passed only five hundred feet above the helicopter. But recall the "UFO squadron" sighted by three experienced flight crews flying near St. Louis on June 5, 1969 (Chapter 5). The American Airlines cockpit observers had also thought that the UFOs posed a collision threat, and that it had come within a few hundred feet of their jetliner—in broad daylight. But in fact the fireball was 125 miles to the north. If an experienced air-

liner flight crew could make an error of 125 miles in broad daylight in estimating the distance to a fireball, then the Army helicopter crew, at night, might also be seriously in error in their estimate that the object had come within five hundred feet. If the object was a meteor, and if in reality it was at a considerably higher altitude, this could explain why there had been "no turbulence, no vortex . . . no engine sound."

Without an accurate fix on the distance to the object, the crew's estimate that the object was fifty to sixty feet long could be grossly in error, for it is basically impossible for the human brain to accurately estimate the size of an *unfamiliar* object in the sky, especially at night, unless its distance is known at least approximately (UFOlogical Principle #5). As the photograph of the "Iowa Fireball" taken by the Peoria newspaper photographer (Plate 3b) shows, a fireball has a long luminous tail of glowing ionized air and gases. It is impossible to estimate its length, even from the picture, because the distance to the fireball is unknown.

The Army helicopter crew might honestly think that they could make out a "gray metallic structure." But recall the multiple observers in Tennessee on the night of March 3, 1968, watching the flaming debris from a Zond-4 rocket enter the atmosphere, who thought they could make out a fuselage that "was constructed of many pieces of flat sheets of metal-like material with a 'riveted-together look.'" One could not exclude the possibility that the helicopter crew, like the Zond-4 observers and so many other UFO observers, were unwitting victims of spurious details supplied by their brains—details which had not actually been observed by their eyes.

My initial investigation included an attempt to determine if there had been any other pilot reports of a

UFO or fireball sighting on October 18, around 11 P.M., that might have been submitted to FAA control towers in the vicinity of Mansfield. With the assistance of Dennis Feldman, assistant director of the FAA public affairs office in Washington, arrangements were made for me to interview tower officials at several airports. From Donald Jones, an FAA supervisor in the Columbus airport tower, I heard a firsthand account that demonstrates the extreme difficulty of accurately estimating the distance to a fireball, even for an observer on the ground. Several years earlier, Jones told me, when he had been a tower controller at the Peoria airport, at around 3 A.M. the interior of the glass-enclosed tower cab had suddenly been illuminated with an intense green glow. When Jones turned toward the source of the illumination, he said he saw a bright fireball that was moving from west to east. The fireball seemed to be so close, Jones told me, that he thought it was in the airport traffic pattern. The fireball seemed to be turning and descending, and he was sure it was going to impact in the outskirts of Peoria, near a brewery.

A few moments later, Jones said, he learned he had erred by something more than *fifty miles* in his estimate. A pilot flying fifty miles east of Peoria radioed in to say that the fireball had just flashed past his aircraft, and was still headed east. The pilot reported that he had expected a mid-air collision and had taken evasive action, Jones told me. Returning to the Mansfield incident, Jones had talked to the watch-supervisor who had been on duty in Columbus the night of October 18, and he told me that there were no pilot reports nor had any of the tower operators spotted anything resembling the Mansfield UFO. When the Cleveland tower checked its records, it found nothing other than the Coyne report. The tower supervisor at the Mansfield airport, Robert

Bohnlein, who had been on duty that night, had seen nothing unusual and said he did not even recall the Army helicopter incident, which had occurred nearly a month prior to our conversation.

Recalling that the Volunteer Flight Officer Network (VFON), discussed in Chapter 6, sometimes gets meteor-sighting reports as well as those involving reentering satellites and space debris, I called Herb Roth, VFON director, in Denver. After checking his records, he said there were none whose date and time corresponded to the Mansfield incident. But Roth suggested that I call Dr. David D. Meisel, director of the American Meteor Society, in Geneseo, New York, whose members collect and submit meteor-sighting reports. Although Meisel had no reports that corresponded to the time and date of the Mansfield incident, he expressed interest in obtaining some details on the Ohio encounter.

Meisel explained that a major meteor shower, the Orionids, occurs every October. The peak activity usually occurs on the nights of October 21 and 22, but he emphasized that "there is considerable activity for a week before and after those dates." This would encompass the date of the Mansfield incident. He told me that the Orionid meteors always come from the east, and asked the origin of the UFO. I told him it had come from the same direction—east. Then he asked the specific time of the Mansfield UFO encounter, and I told him it was a few minutes past 11 P.M. That was interesting, Meisel said, because the Orionid meteor shower usually begins between 11 P.M. and midnight. Then he asked if there had been any predominant color. I told him that the leading edge was an intense red—which is characteristic of the extremely hot ionized air produced by any object entering the atmosphere at very high speed—but that the crew had said the helicopter

cockpit was flooded with green light.* Dr. Meisel replied that the characteristic color of the Orionid meteors is ~~is~~ green.

During our discussion, Dr. Meisel volunteered that even experienced meteorists are sometimes so startled by the sight of a large fireball that they later have trouble in agreeing on the direction from which the meteor came and its trajectory. He said he had seen this happen during an expedition to Florida to watch a major meteor shower, despite the fact that all of the observers had come expecting to see meteors. If the crew of an Army helicopter, never expecting to see a giant fireball, suddenly had spotted one that seemed headed toward their craft on a collision course, surely they could be expected later to have as much difficulty as experienced meteorists in accurately recalling what had happened. If the Mansfield UFO was in reality a large fireball, this could explain the crew's recollection that the object seemed to stop briefly and hover over the helicopter for a couple of seconds. The long luminous tail of the fireball would be overhead for several seconds, illuminating the helicopter canopy and cockpit for this period. In trying to reconstruct what had happened, the crew would recall that the canopy and cockpit had been brightly illuminated for several seconds and might logically *deduce* that the object must have stopped and hovered for that time period.*

* Subsequently I discovered that the overhead portion of the helicopter's transparent canopy is tinted green for protection against intense sunlight. This means that even a white luminous tail of a fireball could have caused the green illumination inside the cockpit.

* Dr. Meisel subsequently informed me that he had received reports of five major fireball incidents that had occurred during the October Orionids meteor shower between the fifteenth and twenty-fifth of the month. But none of these coincided with the October 18 incident near Mansfield.

But what explanation is there for the pilot's recollection that ~~just~~ before that it seemed that the UFO would collide ~~with~~ the helicopter, its barometric altitude was 1,700 feet and it was *descending* at 2,000 feet per minute; yet shortly after the UFO had departed, the pilot reported that the altimeter showed the aircraft to be at 3,500 feet and a separate vertical velocity indicator showed it was *climbing* at 1,000 feet per minute? This was a real puzzler. I discussed the case with Dave Brown, Washington bureau chief for *Aviation Week & Space Technology* magazine, who is an experienced pilot with some hours in helicopters. Brown suggested that perhaps the pilot or co-pilot might *unconsciously* have pulled back on the collective- and/or cyclic-pitch control(s) as he leaned back in his seat to view the luminous object overhead. Later, when I discussed this case with Dan Tisdale of Bell Helicopter Corporation, he agreed that Brown's idea was a distinct possibility. Tisdale is a former Marine Corps helicopter pilot with more than three thousand hours of flying time.

During another telephone conversation with Captain Coyne, I asked him for his best estimate of how long it had been after the glowing object passed overhead before he had looked at the instrument panel and discovered that the helicopter was climbing at 1,000 feet per minute and was at 3,500 feet altitude. He replied, "It is pretty hard to guess . . . I would say maybe thirty seconds, maybe thirty to forty seconds." Then I asked him what his reactions had been at that point—what had he done to stop this unwanted ascent? Coyne replied, "I pulled the collective [pitch] up . . . and put cyclic [pitch] back to neutral." Coyne seemed a bit hesitant in this response because I'm sure that he realized, as I did, that *under those conditions the actions he described would have increased the helicopter's lift*

and rate-of-climb when in fact he was trying to reduce both. When I asked him what happened next, Coyne said after about twenty seconds the helicopter stopped climbing, and later he had descended to his previous 2,500-foot cruise altitude. If Coyne's reactions had been as he recalled them, the helicopter should have continued to climb, for increasing collective-pitch would increase, not decrease, the helicopter's lift. (Since the UFO had long since disappeared over the horizon, one need not consider any possible mystical effects that would cause a helicopter to level out when its basic aerodynamics call for it to climb.)

Suddenly the pieces of the puzzle began to fall into place. It will be recalled that just before the glowing object passed overhead, Coyne said that his instruments showed a barometric altitude of 1,700 feet and that the craft was descending at a rate of 2,000 feet per minute. This 1,700 feet is with respect to sea level, but central Ohio is not at sea level. An aeronautical chart for that region shows that the nearby Mansfield airport is at an elevation of nearly 1,300 feet above sea level. This means that at the moment that Coyne last looked at his instruments, his helicopter was *only 400 feet above the ground and at its descent rate, the craft would have crashed against the ground within twelve seconds!* For the moment, the flight crew's attention was focused on the UFO, which was zooming toward the helicopter and would continue on toward the west. But certainly the flight crew's subconscious must have been warning them not to forget to pull back on the collective-pitch and/or cyclic-pitch immediately, once the UFO collision threat had passed, or the helicopter would soon crash to the ground.

Under these perilous conditions, it would have been instinctive for Coyne, or co-pilot Ariggo Jezzi, to have

quickly pulled the craft out of its rapid descent to climb back to higher altitude—even if this was done unconsciously while the four-man crew was still in a state of near-shock from the frightening encounter. Only if the pilot and co-pilot knew this had been accomplished would they dare to spend the next thirty to forty seconds, by Coyne's own estimate, watching the UFO disappear to the west. My conclusion is that the flight crew reacted precisely as it should have done at the time, and hauled back on the collective-pitch and cyclic-pitch. Some time later, when Coyne looked at his instruments and the panic of earlier moments had passed, he was confused over the sequence of events that were responsible for the helicopter's climb and higher altitude and, understandably, concluded that the UFO had caused the effect.

There is solid physical evidence, or to be more precise, a lack of it, to support this explanation that the helicopter was operating normally and that it had not been "sucked" upward by some mysterious force at extremely high speed. The day after the incident, Coyne had the helicopter and its rotor blades carefully examined by five mechanics and a certified Federal Aviation Administration inspector to determine if there had been any structural damage. A special instrument was used to detect any strains that might not be visible to the eye. The inspection showed that there was *no* evidence of structural damage which would have occurred if the helicopter had been "sucked" upward at extremely high velocity.

If this change from a 2,000-foot-per-minute descent to a 1,000-foot-per-minute climb was due to the unconscious reaction of the flight crew to avoid ground impact, then the whole incident must have consumed a somewhat longer time than the crew later estimated.

For example, if the helicopter's descent had been converted into a 1,000-foot-per-minute climb in only ten seconds, then it would have required nearly *two minutes* for the craft to have reached a 3,500-foot altitude—where Coyne first studied his cockpit instruments after the UFO had passed. This would be four times the thirty seconds that Coyne had estimated. Similarly, where Coyne estimated that his original descent from 2,500 feet to 1,700 feet occupied about ten seconds, Tisdale's calculations show that the helicopter would require about thirty seconds for this maneuver. Thus there appears to have been a three-fold or four-fold "distortion of time" in the recollection by the crew of events that transpired during those hectic moments—a distortion of time caused simply by the difficulty of recalling the time-duration of unexpected and frightening events.

But what explanation is there for the radio communications difficulties reported by the helicopter crew in the wake of the incident? The most basic one is that the helicopter was approximately fifty to sixty miles away from the airports at Cleveland, Columbus and Akron at the time of the incident. At the helicopter's relatively low altitude it was simply below and beyond the effective range of those airport radio facilities. To check this, I asked Coyne to run a test the next time he flew near Mansfield, by trying to contact the Cleveland, Columbus and Akron-Canton airport towers from the same altitude at which the helicopter was flying at the time of the UFO incident. Coyne later made such a test, and he reported back to me that *he was not able to make contact with any one of these three airports*—simply because he was beyond the range of their radio coverage at this relatively low altitude. He was,

however, able to make contact during the test with the nearby Mansfield tower.

Thus the mysterious behavior of the radio on the night of the UFO incident really boils down to why the Mansfield tower had not responded. Every experienced pilot will confirm that there have been instances when his radio call to an airport tower has failed to elicit a reply. Perhaps the controllers are busy talking to other aircraft at the moment and they know that if another pilot fails to get a reply he will call in again. During the late shift the Mansfield tower usually has two controllers on duty, but occasionally it has only one. Another possible explanation, if an aircraft is maneuvering at the time it calls the tower, is that its fuselage may be shielding its own antenna in the direction of the tower. Perhaps the microphone button itself occasionally fails to function properly.* The point is that there are numerous instances every day throughout the country when a pilot's call to a tower fails to bring back a reply.


Coyne's description of how the co-pilot was rapidly tuning the helicopter radio in a desperate effort to make radio contact suggests still another possible explanation. The helicopter was equipped with a Model 807A very-high-frequency (VHF) radio, built by Wilcox Electric Company, whom I called to learn more about the equipment. Engineer Robert Piper explained to me that in changing frequencies, the radio set may require up to five seconds—under certain conditions—

* Malfunctions of the microphone on-off button are sufficiently commonplace that the Federal Aviation Administration has proposed that a warning light be installed in the cockpit to alert the flight crew to a malfunction that results in the radio transmitter being turned on without the pilot's knowledge, thereby causing interference to other aircraft.

to settle down on the newly selected channel. Thus it is conceivable that the co-pilot, in his anxiety to make radio contact, did not allow sufficient time for the radio tuning mechanism to settle down to the Mansfield tower frequency.

It is interesting to speculate on what might have happened if the flight crew had failed to act promptly and instinctively to pull the helicopter out of its rapid descent after the collision threat had passed, and if the craft had crashed as a result, killing all on board. A team of experienced Army investigators would have been dispatched to the scene to sift through the debris to try to explain why the helicopter—under full power, during perfectly clear weather conditions—had flown into the ground. Unable to find an apparent cause, the Army might have issued a public request for possible witnesses to the accident. Coyne told me that following his appearance on the Cavett program, he had received a telephone call from a man living near Galion, Ohio, who had reported seeing the incident. (My subsequent attempts to locate this witness have proved fruitless.) If this witness had responded to the Army request, and had described the seeming near-collision of a bright glowing object and the helicopter, at a time when Ohio was experiencing a rash of UFO reports, it would undoubtedly have resulted in another "Mantell-type" incident, with black newspaper headlines reading: "UFO Knocks Down Army Helicopter."


This would have caused understandable concern among the nation's civil and military pilots, who would henceforth keep their eyes peeled for UFOs. And for weeks or months there would be numerous reports from pilots of misidentified meteor-fireballs and weather balloons—all reported as UFOs. This would have generated pressures for still another Congressional hearing,

and for another government-funded UFO investigation, etc.  Contemplating this likely aftermath, we should all be grateful for the instinctive, if unconscious, reactions of pilot Coyne or co-pilot Jezzi in pulling their helicopter out of its steep descent barely four hundred feet above the ground.

Now that the Mansfield incident has been selected as the best UFO case of 1973 by the *National Enquirer's* panel of experts, and the four-man crew is \$5,000 richer as well as being internationally famous UFO celebrities, it will not be easy for them to accept the explanation that the UFO was merely a bright fireball, that the seemingly mysterious behavior of the helicopter was due to the unconscious, instinctive reactions of well-trained pilots, and that the seemingly curious behavior of the radio was due to quite normal causes.

1976 Postscript: Dr. Hynek rejects the idea that the glowing object could have been a meteor/fireball on the grounds that "it would have been seen over several states and undoubtedly reported by a great many people." This ignores the fact that the incident occurred around 11 P.M., over a thinly populated area, when there would be few potential observers.

Hynek's hypothesis is disproved by an incident that occurred approximately two hundred miles east of Mansfield two nights after the helicopter incident. A United Air Lines jetliner crew, flying south of Pittsburgh, reported seeing a bright fireball at approximately 9 P.M.—two hours earlier than the Mansfield incident. At this earlier hour there would have been more potential observers outside. Yet no other pilot reports were received and the American Meteor Society received no reports from ground observers.



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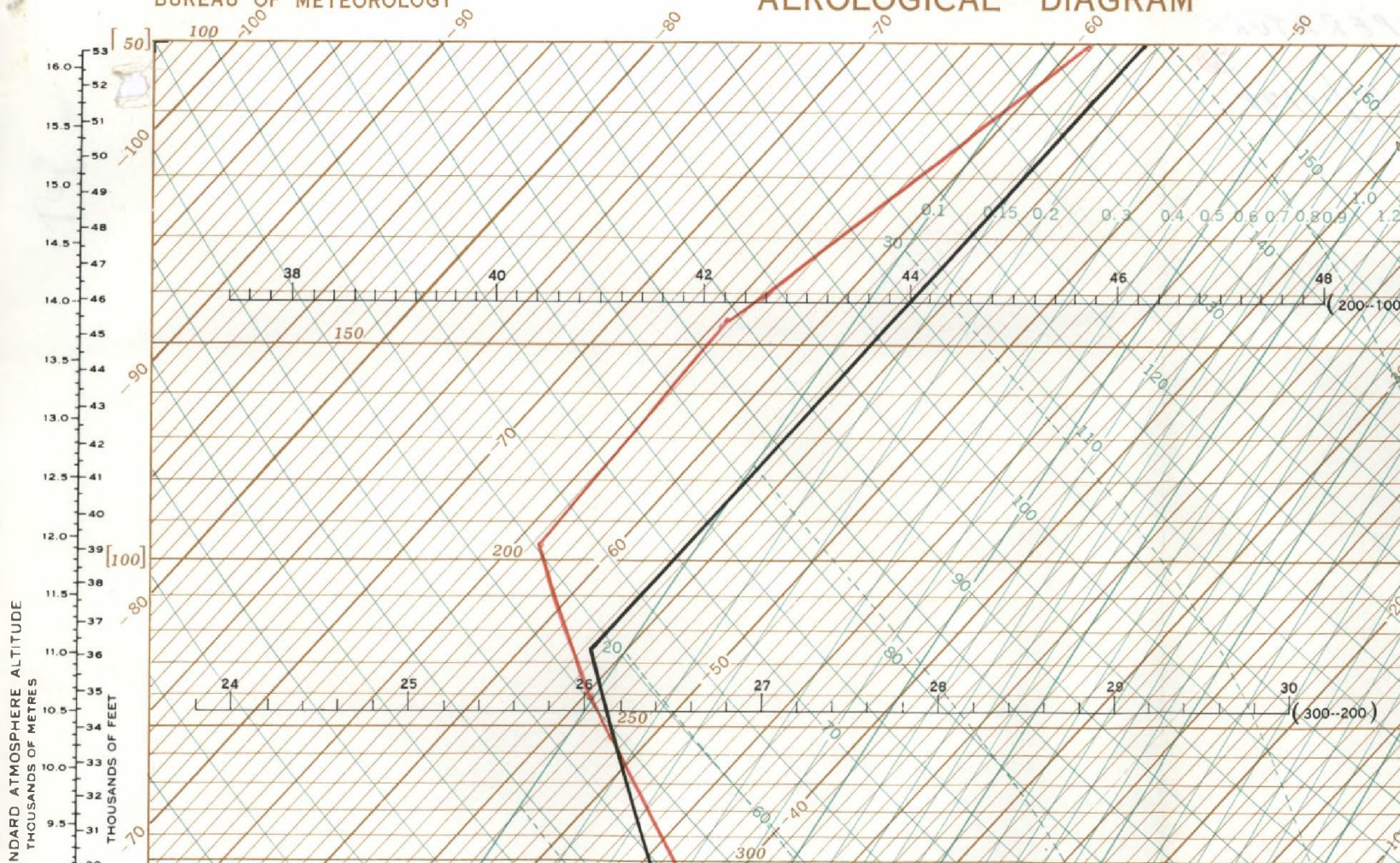
BUREAU OF METEOROLOGY

AEROLOGICAL DIAGRAM

SKW T - LOG P AEROLOGICAL DIAGRAM

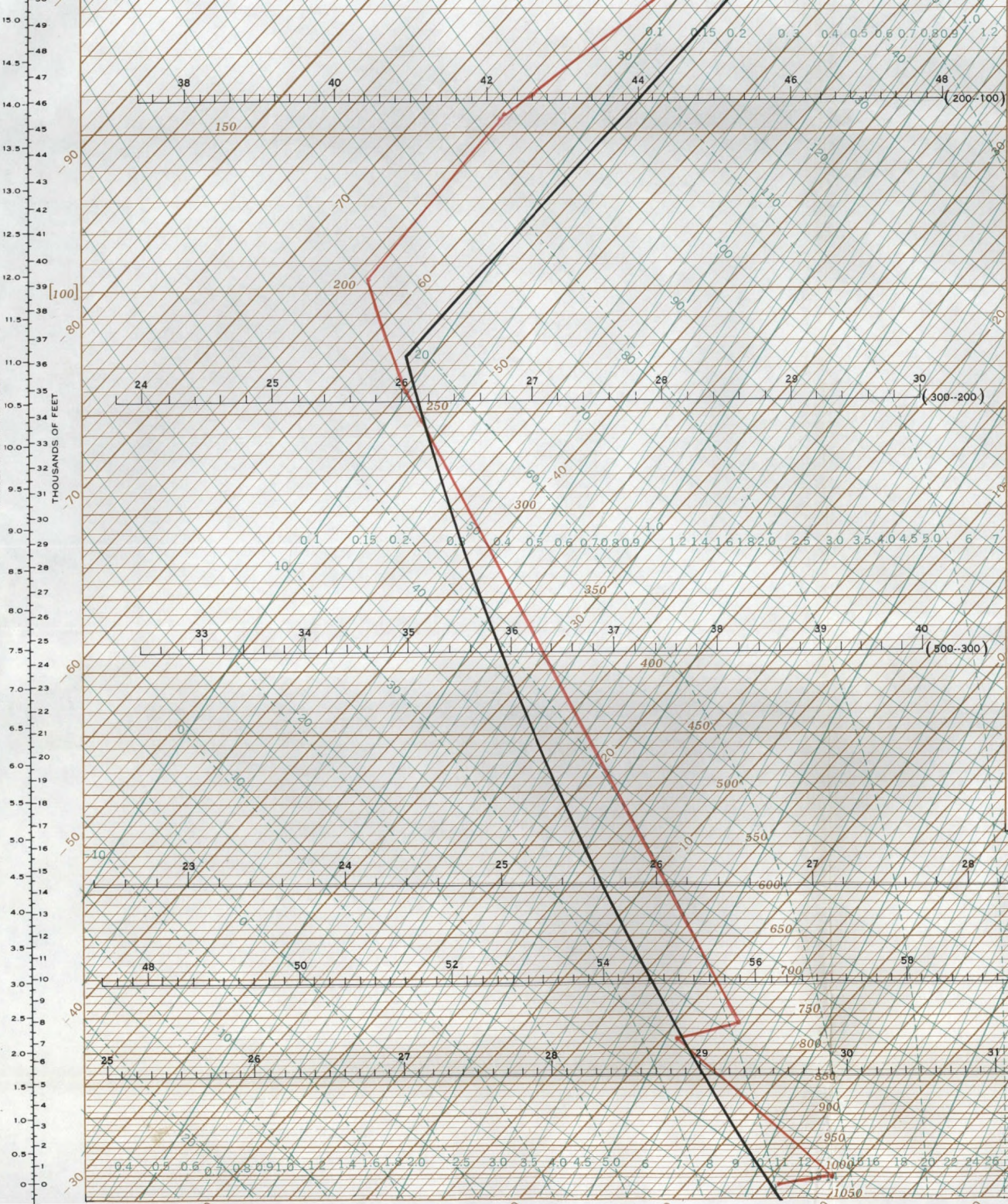
STATION *LAVERTON, Vic*

INTERNATIONAL INDEX NUMBER			
HOUR GMT	<i>1100</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>Z</i>
DATE GMT	<i>21/10/78</i>		
PRESSURE MB	HEIGHT OR THICKNESS METRES		
TROPOPAUSE			
FREEZING LEVEL			
100			
200			
200 - 100	<i>From transmitted data, not original record.</i>		
300			
300 - 200			
500			
500 - 300	<i>N.B. Subsidence inversion from approx 7000 ft to approx 8000 ft</i>		
700			
700 - 500			
850			
1000			
1000 - 500			
1000 - 700			

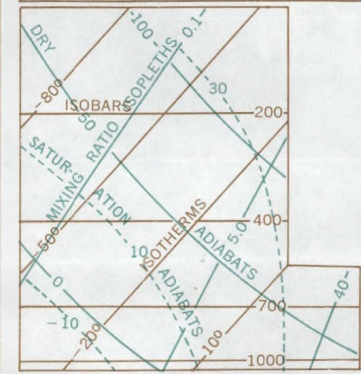


STANDARD ATMOSPHERE ALTITUDE
THOUSANDS OF METRES

ICAO STANDARD ATMOSPHERE ALTITUDE
THOUSANDS OF METRES



PRESSURE MB	HEIGHT OR THICKNESS METRES
TROPOPAUSE	
FREEZING LEVEL	
100	
200	
200 - 100	<i>From transmitted data, not original record.</i>
300	
300 - 200	
500	
500 - 300	<i>N.B. Subsidence</i>
700	<i>inversion from</i>
700 - 500	<i>approx 700 ft to approx 800 ft</i>
850	
1000	
1000 - 500	
1000 - 700	



NOTES

1. IF THE SOUNDING REACHES ABOVE THE 100 MB LEVEL RESULTS SHOULD BE PLOTTED USING PRESSURE VALUES IN BRACKETS [100]
2. FOR FURTHER EXPLANATION SEE METEOROLOGICAL NOTE NO. 5 - USE OF THE F160.

LAVERTON TEMPERATURE

③

TRACE 9pm 21/10/78

Lights of another aircraft.

His own aircraft position lights (wing tip).

Reflections on the windscreen of lights in his aircraft.

Planets/bright stars.

Lighthouses.

Reflections on clouds of light-house beams or other lights.

Searchlights from ships or aircraft.

Gunfire or flares or other pyrotechnics.

Lights on ships.

Lights on shore (mainland or island).

Radio sonde lights.

Aurora Australis.

Meteor shower.

Birds.

Moths.

Con-trails.

Met. balloons.

St. Elmo's Fire (static on windscreen).



SEARCH AND RESCUE
REPORT AND ANALYSIS

RCC IDENTIFYING NUMBER 7831/081 ⁽²⁷⁾
DOCKET NUMBER ML 081S
YEAR 1978 CHECKED

LEFT SIDE OF PAGE TO BE COMPLETED BY RCC-USE BLOCK LETTERS

RIGHT SIDE OF PAGE FOR CENTRAL OFFICE USE

Identifying Information
AIRCRAFT REGISTRATION: VH DSJ
DATE OF OCCURRENCE: (Local Time) 21 OCT 1978
LOCATION: BASS STRAIT - BETWEEN CAPE OTWAY AND KING I
SEARCH & RESCUE REGION: VICTORIA/TASMANIA
AIRCRAFT MAKE OR VESSEL NAME: CESSNA
AIRCRAFT MODEL OR VESSEL NAME CONT'D: C182
TIME OF OCCURRENCE(GMT): 21 10 0912

DOCKET NUMBER
01-06 ML 081S
07-13 VH DSJ
17-22 17.0.21.78
23 N
24-40 CAPE OTWAY V.T.C.
41-51 CESSNA
52-57 182K
58-67
68-71 0912
79-80 10.0

CARD IDENT

CLASS OF OPERATION: ☒ PVT A ☐ ICHTR B ☐ ANR203 C ☐ A'LINE D ☐ AWK E ☐ MIL F
FLIGHT PROCEDURES: ☐ VFR A ☐ IFR B ☐ ILM IFR C ☒ INGT VMC D
OPERATOR: F VALENTICH
OWNER: SOUTHERN AIR SERVICES

TYPE OF SEARCH
STATE, TERRITORY, COUNTRY
AIRCRAFT MAKE CODE
AIRCRAFT MODEL CODE

01-13 AS FOR CARD 00
17 A
18-19 03
20-22 039
23-24 17
38 A
43 D
65-70 145103
73-78 01.05.76
79-80 01

CARD IDENT

Emergency Circumstances

SELECT UP TO TWO ITEMS

- ☐ A LOW ON FUEL
☐ B SMOKE IN COCKPIT
☐ C PASSENGER DISTURBANCE
☐ D FALSE FIRE WARNING
☐ E ADVERSE/UNFAVOURABLE WEATHER
☐ F APPROACHING DARKNESS
☐ G SUSPECTED OR KNOWN DAMAGE
☒ H SUSPECTED MECHANICAL PROBLEM
☐ I DOOR/PANEL OPEN
☐ J AIRFRAME BUFFET
☐ K UNUSUAL NOISE
☐ L PHYSICAL CONDITION OF PASSENGER
☐ M FUMES IN CABIN

- ☐ N PROP/ENGINE VIBRATION
☐ O HIJACK
☐ P FIRE
☐ Q UNREPORTED BY SARTIME
☐ R UNREPORTED ARRIVAL
☐ S BOMB WARNING
☐ T LOSS OF COMMUNICATION
☒ U OVERDUE
☐ V AGROUND
☐ W MAN OVERBOARD
☐ X RECEIPT OF DISTRESS MESSAGE
☐ Y RECEIPT OF DISTRESS SIGNAL

OTHER SPECIFY

CARD IDENT

01-13 AS FOR CARD 00
18-19 HU
79-80 10.2

Route Information

LAST DEPARTURE POINT: MOORABBIN
NEXT INTENDED STOPPING POINT: KING ISLAND
LOCATION OF OBJECT WHEN FOUND: NOT FOUND

01-13 AS FOR CARD 00

17
18-37 MOORABBIN
38
39-58 KING ISLAND
59
60-78 NOT FOUND
79-80 10.3

CARD IDENT

Survivors/Injuries

MARK APPROPRIATE BOX ACCORDING TO HIGHEST INJURY SUSTAINED

INJURY INDEX FATAL ☐ SERIOUS ☐ MINOR ☐ NIL ☐ UNKNOWN ☒

01-13 AS FOR CARD 00

17 Z

PERSONS ON BOARD TOTAL: 1
NUMBER FATAL INJURIES: 0
NUMBER SERIOUS INJURIES: 0
NUMBER MINOR INJURIES: 0
NUMBER NIL INJURIES: 0
UNKNOWN: 1

FATAL | SERIOUS | MINOR | NIL | UNKNOWN | TOTAL

18-35

CARD IDENT 79-80 0.8

Page 2

REPORT AND ANALYSIS

01-13 AS FOR CARD 00

18-19	16
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20-21 |

22-24 |

25 | 0

26 | ~~7~~

28 | Z

2004

29 | C

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3G/Z

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31/2

1,875

01-13 AS FOR CARD 00

17-21	
22-26	
27-31	
32-36	
37-41	
42-46	
47-51	
52-56	
57-61	
62-66	

79-80 0 6 CARD IDENT

Weather at time object went missing MARK APPROPRIATE BOX(S)

Page 3

CARD 18

CLOUD CONDITION	
<input type="checkbox"/> A CLEAR	<input type="checkbox"/> F OVERCAST 8/8
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> B SCATTERED 4/8 OR LESS ABOVE 1000 FT	<input type="checkbox"/> G OVERCAST WITH SCATTERED CLOUD BELOW
<input type="checkbox"/> C SCATTERED BELOW 1000 FT	<input type="checkbox"/> H PARTIAL OBSCURATION
<input type="checkbox"/> D BROKEN 5/8 TO 7/8	<input type="checkbox"/> I OBSCURATION
<input type="checkbox"/> E BROKEN WITH SCATTERED CLOUD BELOW 5/8 TO 7/8	<input type="checkbox"/> Z UNKNOWN

01-13 AS FOR CARD 00

17 BCEILING: 4000 - 6000 FT18-22 4000

VISIBILITY	
<input type="checkbox"/> A LESS THAN 1 KM	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> D GREATER THAN 8 KM
<input type="checkbox"/> B 1 TO 5 KM	<input type="checkbox"/> Z UNKNOWN
<input type="checkbox"/> C 5 TO 8 KM	

23 D

PRECIPITATION	
<input type="checkbox"/> A HAIL	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> D NONE
<input type="checkbox"/> B RAIN SELECT UP TO 2 ITEMS	<input type="checkbox"/> Z UNKNOWN
<input type="checkbox"/> C SNOW	

24-25 D

ATMOSPHERIC OBSTRUCTIONS TO VISION	
<input type="checkbox"/> A DUST	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> E NONE
<input type="checkbox"/> B FOG	<input type="checkbox"/> F PRECIPITATION
<input type="checkbox"/> C HAZE	<input type="checkbox"/> Z UNKNOWN
<input type="checkbox"/> D SMOKE	

26 E

GENERAL WEATHER		SELECT UP TO 3 ITEMS		OTHER SPECIFY	
<input type="checkbox"/> A TURBULENCE	<input type="checkbox"/> F WIND GUSTY	<input type="checkbox"/> K ICING	<input type="checkbox"/> Z UNKNOWN		
<input type="checkbox"/> B MOUNTAIN WAVE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> G WIND VARIABLE	<input type="checkbox"/> L THUNDER STORM			
<input type="checkbox"/> C FRONTAL ACTIVITY	<input type="checkbox"/> H WIND VARIABLE & GUSTY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> M CLEAR			
<input type="checkbox"/> D LINE SQUALL	<input type="checkbox"/> I PRECIPITATION HEAVY	<input type="checkbox"/> N CALM			
<input type="checkbox"/> E VARIABLE CLOUD BASE	<input type="checkbox"/> J PRECIPITATION LIGHT	<input type="checkbox"/> P CYCLONE			

34-36 M.HTEMPERATURE DEGREES C: EST 1437-39 14WIND DIRECTION: VARIABLE40-42 VWIND SPEED KNOTS: 5-8 KT43-45 5

SEA STATE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 0 GLASSY - WAVE HEIGHT 0 METRES	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 ROUGH - WAVE HEIGHT 2.5 - 4 METRES
<input type="checkbox"/> 1 RIPPLED - " 0 - 0.1 "	<input type="checkbox"/> 6 VERY ROUGH - " 4 - 6 "
<input type="checkbox"/> 2 SMOOTH - " 0.1 - 0.5 "	<input type="checkbox"/> 7 HIGH - " 6 - 9 "
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3 SLIGHT - " 0.5 - 1.25 "	<input type="checkbox"/> 8 VERY HIGH - " 9 - 14 "
<input type="checkbox"/> 4 MODERATE - " 1.25 - 2.5 "	<input type="checkbox"/> 9 PHENOMENAL - " OVER 14 "

46 3

Weather during search

Using the descriptions above for weather conditions give the weather conditions for each day of search
 FOR EXAMPLE: PRECIPITATION DAY 1: RAIN

CLOUD CONDITION DAY 1: SCATTERED 4/8 OR LESS ABOVE 1000 FT47 B

"	"	2:	<u>✓</u>	48 <u>B</u>
"	"	3:	<u>✓</u>	49 <u>B</u>
"	"	4:	<u>✓</u>	50 <u>B</u>
"	"	5:	<u>✓</u>	51 <u>B</u>
"	"	6:		52
"	"	7:		53
"	"	8:		54
"	"	9:		55

CARD IDENT 79-80 1.8

CEILING	DAY 1:	DAY 2:	DAY 3:	DAY 4:	DAY 5:	DAY 6:	DAY 7:	DAY 8:	DAY 9:	CARD 17
"	<u>4000 - 6000 FT</u>	<u>2500 - 4000 FT</u>	<u>5000 - 7000 FT</u>	<u>8000 FT</u>	<u>9000 FT</u>					01-13 AS FOR CARD 00
"										23-26 <u>4000</u>
"										28-31 <u>2500</u>
"										32-35 <u>5000</u>
"										36-39 <u>8000</u>
"										40-43 <u>9000</u>
"										44-47
"										48-51
"										52-55
"										56-59

CARD IDENT 79-80 1.7

WIND DIRECTION		DAY 1:	01-13 AS FOR CARD 00	CARD 21
1:		VARIABLE	17	Y
2:		360	18	Q
3:		020/360	19	Q
4:		360	20	Q
5:		CALM	21	Q
6:			22	
7:			24	
8:			26	
9:			27	

WIND SPEED KNOTS		DAY 1:	28	1
1:		5-8 KT	30	2
2:		8 KT	31	4
3:		20 KT BECOMING 5 KT	32	3
4:		15 KT	34	0
5:		CALM	35	
6:			36	
7:			37	
8:			38	
9:				

EMERGENCY LOCATOR BEACON AIRCRAFT(ELBA) EMERGENCY POSITION INDICATOR RADIO BEACON(EPIRB)

FIXED INSTALLATION

USED - EFFECTIVE IN RESCUE

USED - INEFFECTIVE IN RESCUE/FAILED TO FUNCTION

PORTABLE EQUIPMENT

USED - EFFECTIVE IN RESCUE

USED - INEFFECTIVE IN RESCUE/FAILED TO FUNCTION

NOT INSTALLED

INADVERTANT ACTUATION

ELBA		EPIRB	
<input type="checkbox"/>	A	<input type="checkbox"/>	G
<input type="checkbox"/>	B	<input type="checkbox"/>	H
<input type="checkbox"/>	C	<input type="checkbox"/>	J
<input type="checkbox"/>	D	<input type="checkbox"/>	K
<input type="checkbox"/>	E	<input type="checkbox"/>	L
<input type="checkbox"/>	F	<input type="checkbox"/>	M

45

NOT KNOWN

CARD IDENT 79-80/2.1

General information

CARD 23

SEARCH RESULTS/LOCATION OF MISSING OBJECT WHEN FOUND

☐ Y FOUND IN SEARCH AREA ☐ X FOUND OUTSIDE SEARCH AREA ☒ N NOT FOUND

NAME OF ORGANISATION/PERSON INITIATING SEARCH

DOT

17 N
20-31 DOT

SAR ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY- (SELECT UP TO 3 ITEMS)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> STATE POLICE GROUND PARTIES	<input type="checkbox"/> S ARMY AIRCRAFT
<input type="checkbox"/> AIRCRAFT	<input type="checkbox"/> VESSELS/GROUND PARTIES
<input type="checkbox"/> VESSELS	<input type="checkbox"/> CIVIL DEFENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> AUSTRALIA POLICE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RAAF AIRCRAFT/GROUND PARTIES	<input type="checkbox"/> COAST GUARD
<input type="checkbox"/> RAN AIRCRAFT	<input type="checkbox"/> MOC
<input type="checkbox"/> VESSELS	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER

DATE SEARCH COMMENCED 21-10-1978

DATE SEARCH COMPLETED 25-10-1978

35-37 LP

38-43 102/78

44-49 102/78

DATE CODED 50-55 040479

NUMBER OF DAYS OF SEARCH 5

56-57 5

SELECT ONE ITEM FROM EACH BOX

MEANS OF LOCATING MISSING OBJECT

<input type="checkbox"/> A SIGHTED BY SEARCH AIRCRAFT
<input type="checkbox"/> B " " OTHER
<input type="checkbox"/> C " " SEARCH VESSEL
<input type="checkbox"/> D SIGHTED BY OTHER VESSEL
<input type="checkbox"/> E " " BY " MEANS
<input type="checkbox"/> F LOCATED BY ELECTRONIC MEANS
<input type="checkbox"/> G OTHER(SPECIFY)

METHOD OF RESCUE OF SURVIVORS

<input type="checkbox"/> A FIXED WING LAND AIRCRAFT
<input type="checkbox"/> B " " AMPHIBIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> C ROTARY WING AIRCRAFT
<input type="checkbox"/> D VESSEL
<input type="checkbox"/> E LAND PARTY
<input type="checkbox"/> F HOVER CRAFT
<input type="checkbox"/> G OTHER(SPECIFY)

STATUS INDICATOR

58-60 F

YEAR OF OCCURRENCE 1978

MARINE SEARCH NUMBER

63-64 78

65-70

CARD IDENT 79-80/2.3

SEARCH MISSIONS FLOWN - MILITARY AIRCRAFT

DAY 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
NIL	1	1	NIL	NIL				

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
17-34	0	1	1	0	0			

CARD 09

SEARCH MISSIONS FLOWN - CIVIL AIRCRAFT

DAY 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
3	3	4	8	2				

35-52	3	3	4	8	2			
-------	---	---	---	---	---	--	--	--

TOTAL MISSIONS MILITARY 2 TOTAL MISSIONS CIVIL 20

53-58 2 20

CARD IDENT

79-80 0 9

CARD 10

ENTER HOURS FLOWN DETAILS AS DECIMALS E.G. 2½ HOURS ENTER AS 2.5

DAILY SEARCH HOURS FLOWN - MILITARY AIRCRAFT

DAY 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
NIL	10.2	8.9	NIL	NIL				

01-13 AS FOR CARD 00

17-34 0.0 10.2 8.9 0.0

35-52 0.0

DAILY SEARCH HOURS FLOWN - CIVIL AIRCRAFT

DAY 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1.7	5.2	8.7	25.2	7.1				

53-68 1.7 5.2 8.7 25.2

79-80 1 0 CARD IDENT

CARD 11

01-13 AS FOR CARD 00

17-36 7.1

DAILY TOTAL HOURS FLOWN - MILITARY AIRCRAFT

DAY 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
NIL	12.9	10.4	NIL	NIL				

37-56 0.0 12.9 10.4 0.0 0.0

57-68

79-80 1 1 CARD IDENT

CARD 12

01-13 AS FOR CARD 00

17-20

DAILY TOTAL HOURS FLOWN - CIVIL AIRCRAFT

DAY 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1.8	5.5	9.4	33.8	9.3				

21-40 1.8 5.5 9.4 33.8 9.3

41-60

TOTAL SEARCH HOURS FLOWN - MILITARY AIRCRAFT 19.1

61-65 19.1

- CIVIL

47.9

66-70 47.9

79-80 1 2 CARD IDENT

CARD 13

01-13 AS FOR CARD 00

TOTAL HOURS FLOWN - MILITARY AIRCRAFT 23.3

17-22 23.3

- CIVIL

59.8

23-28 59.8

79-80 1 3 CARD IDENT

CARD 04

ESTIMATED COSTS OF SEARCH: TO BE MADE BY SMC AND/OR ADMIN OFFICER

IMMEDIATELY SEARCH ENDS.

MISCELLANEOUS COSTS

AIRCRAFT COSTS 12,000

LABOUR COSTS 1800

TOTAL COST OF SEARCH 13800

01-13 AS FOR CARD 00

17-22

28-39 12,000.00

40-51 13,800.00

52-57 18,000.00

CARD IDENT

79-80 0.4

Remarks

VH-DSS, a Cessna 172, departed Moorabbin at 0819 GMT 21st October 1978 on a VFR/NV flight to King Island via Cape Otway. The pilot reported Cape Otway at 0900 with an ETA King Island of 0938. This position report was conclusively confirmed by ground sighting reports received later.

At 0906 the pilot reported and continued to report strange lights around the aircraft until 0912 when he reported an engine problem and would continue to King Island. The Distress phase was declared and Rescuer Emergency Procedures activated at King Island. Radio contact was lost with the aircraft shortly afterwards.

The Distress phase was declared at 0933 with the non arrival of DSS at King Island.

An Air/Land/Sea search commenced within 30 mins of the Distress phase and continued until 0900 GMT on the 25th October. No wreckage was sighted.

01-13 AS FOR CARD 00

17-64 P - A/C REPTD

STRANGE LIGH-
TS AND ENG PR-
R IN FLT-KI A

CARD IDENT 79-80, 1, 4,

01-13 AS FOR CARD 00

17-66

EPS ACTIVAT-
D-AIR/LND/SEA-
SRCH-NIL WRE-
CKAGE-P250900

CARD IDENT 79-80, 1, 5,

FOR REGIONAL USE ONLY

SEARCH AIRCRAFT DETAILS

DATE OF SEARCH	TYPE OF AIRCRAFT	CALLSIGN	OWNER OR OPERATOR	ATD AND DEPARTURE POINT	HOURS FLOWN		COST
					ON SEARCH	TOTAL	
21-10-78 21-10-78	CESSNA 402	VH RCT	NICHOLAS SKYWAYS	210958GMT KING ISLAND	0+39	0+45	
21.10.78	P. PGR PA31	VH PDN	BASS AIR	211205 KING ISLAND	1+05	1+15	
22.10.78	CESSNA 150	VH DMU	G. DODGE	① 211958 ② 220457 KING ISLAND	3+19	3+38	
22-10-78	CESSNA 337	VH EGX	PRO FLITE AIR SERVICES P/L	220518 WARRNAMBOOL	1+22	1+27	
22.10.78	P.3 ORION	R.251	RAAF	211802, RAAF EDINBURGH	10+15	12+51	
23.10.78	P.3 ORION	R252	RAAF	222220 RAAF EDINBURGH	8+41	10+23	
23.10.78	CESSNA 150	VH DMU	G. DODGE	① 222047 KING ② 230137 ISLAND ③ 230328	6+37	7+02.	
23.10.78	NOMAD	GAF1	GOVT. AIRCRAFT FACTORY	222322 AVALON	2+40	3+08	
24.10.78	NOMAD	GAF1 GAF5	GOVT AIRCRAFT FACTORY	① 232350 ② 0540 AVALON	6+00	8+45	
24.10.78	CESSNA 172	VH DNS	E. FOSTER	0024 KING ISLAND	1+49	1+55	
24.10.78	PIPER AZTEC	VH MBQ	AUSTRALIAN AIR CHARTERS	0349 MOORABBIN	3+42	5+09	
24.10.78	PIPER PA31	VH RTO	AUSTRALIAN AIR CHARTERS	0320 MOORABBIN	4+10	5+20	
24.10.78	PIPER PA31	VH MBT	AUSTRALIA AIR CHARTERS	0319 MOORABBIN	4+06	5+16	
24-10-78	BEECH B58	VH ETV	FLINDERS ISLAND AIRWAYS	0602 MOORABBIN	2+10	3+18	
24.10.78	PIPER AZTEC	VH BOC	FLINDERS ISLAND AIRWAYS	0402 MOORABBIN	3+13	4+20	
25.10.78	BEECH B58	VH ETV	FLINDERS ISLAND AIRWAYS	① 242151 ② 250333 MOORABBIN	7+07	9+20	



Recd. Sec's office

12 MAY 1982

MINUTE

→ Mr. Ince land

For information

31 26
P.K. 19/8

Ref M116/783/1047(2)

*GET put on
File please HOS 25/5*

DPR

c.c. SECRETARY
DEP SEC (AO)
FAS(FW)
FAS(AO)

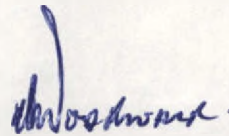
DISAPPEARANCE OF CESSNA 182 AIRCRAFT VH-DSJ

- . You will recall the "Valentich" case which occurred on 21 October 1978
 - it continues to be raised by the media and UFO enthusiasts
 - from time to time the Minister and the Department receive requests for information
 - : we have said in reply on several occasions that we expect to produce a summary report when our investigation is completed.
- . A missing aircraft is an accident by Annex 13 and ANR 270 definition
 - our investigation was along the lines followed in a more normal missing aircraft occurrence
 - : UFO aspects are of course a matter for the RAAF
 - it follows that any report issued in respect of our investigation should follow our normal practices
 - : and copies made available to parties with a bona fide interest.
- . A Summary Report has now been prepared and approved in respect of this occurrence
 - it is simply a statement of fact
 - an unedited transcript of communications is included because of the unusual circumstances
 - : the transcript was, in this case, released to the media shortly after the aircraft disappeared



15 MAY 1985

- copies of the Summary Report are about to be provided to the aircraft owner, operator, father of the missing pilot and the Coroner
 - : and to those other parties who have made enquiries and who have a more or less bona fide interest.
- . Copies of reports of this type are not normally made available to the media or other parties not having, in our view, a bona fide interest
 - but the contents of such reports are not considered confidential and are likely to become public knowledge when released to the parties mentioned above.
- . A copy of the Summary Report covering this occurrence is attached for your information
 - it is brought to your attention at this time because of the likelihood of media enquiries when it becomes known that such a report exists.



(A.R. Woodward)
A/g Assistant Secretary
(Air Safety Investigation)

7.5.82



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT

AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION SUMMARY REPORT

Reference No.

V116/783/1047

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

1. LOCATION OF OCCURRENCE

Location	Height a.m.s.l.	Date	Time (Local)	Zone
Not known	-	21.10.78	Not known	EST

2. THE AIRCRAFT

Make and Model	Registration	Certificate of Airworthiness
Cessna 182L	VH-DSJ	Valid from 14 February 1968
Certificate of Registration issued to Cephus Day, 33 Reserve Road, Beaumaris, Victoria	Operator SAS Southern Air Services, Northern Avenue, Moorabbin Airport, Victoria	Degree of damage to aircraft Not known Other property damaged -
Defects discovered -		

3. THE FLIGHT

Last or intended departure point	Time of departure	Next point of intended landing	Purpose of flight	Class of operation
Moorabbin	1819 hours	King Island	Travel	Private

4. THE CREW

Name	Status	Age	Class of licence	Hours on type	Total hours	Degree of injury
Frederick VALENTICH	Pilot	20	Private	Not known	150 (Approx.)	Presumed Fatal

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

Name	Status	Degree of injury	Name	Status	Degree of injury

6. RELEVANT EVENTS

The pilot obtained a Class Four instrument rating on 11 May 1978 and he was therefore authorised to operate at night in visual meteorological conditions (VMC). On the afternoon of 21 October 1978 he attended the Moorabbin Briefing Office, obtained a meteorological briefing and, at 1723 hours, submitted a flight plan for a night VMC flight from Moorabbin to King Island and return. The cruising altitude nominated in the flight plan was below 5000 feet, with estimated time intervals of 41 minutes to Cape Otway and 28 minutes from Cape Otway to King Island. The total fuel endurance was shown as 300 minutes. The pilot made no arrangements for aerodrome lighting to be illuminated for his arrival at King Island. He advised the briefing officer and the operator's representative that he was uplifting friends at King Island and took four life jackets in the aircraft with him.

The aircraft was refuelled to capacity at 1810 hours and departed Moorabbin at 1819 hours. After departure the pilot established two-way radio communications with Melbourne Flight Service Unit (FSU).

The pilot reported Cape Otway at 1900 hours and the next transmission received from the aircraft was at 1906:14 hours. The following communications between the aircraft and Melbourne FSU were recorded from this time: (Note: The word/words in brackets are open to other interpretations.)

TIME	FROM	TEXT
1906:14	VH-DSJ	MELBOURNE this is DELTA SIERRA JULIET is there any known traffic below five thousand
:23	FSU	DELTA SIERRA JULIET no known traffic
:26	VH-DSJ	DELTA SIERRA JULIET I am seems (to) be a large aircraft below five thousand

6. RELEVANT EVENTS (cont'd)

31

TIME	FROM	TEXT
:46	FSU	D D DELTA SIERRA JULIET what type of aircraft is it
:50	VH-DSJ	DELTA SIERRA JULIET I cannot affirm it is four bright it seems to me like landing lights
1907:04	FSU	DELTA SIERRA JULIET
:32	VH-DSJ	MELBOURNE this (is) DELTA SIERRA JULIET the aircraft has just passed over over me at least a thousand feet above
:43	FSU	DELTA SIERRA JULIET roger and it it is a large aircraft confirm
:47	VH-DSJ	er unknown due to the speed it's travelling is there any airforce aircraft in the vicinity
:57	FSU	DELTA SIERRA JULIET no known aircraft in the vicinity
1908:18	VH-DSJ	MELBOURNE it's approaching now from due east towards me
:28	FSU	DELTA SIERRA JULIET
:42		// open microphone for two seconds //
:49	VH-DSJ	DELTA SIERRA JULIET it seems to me that he's playing some sort of game he's flying over me two three times at a time at speeds I could not identify
1909:02	FSU	DELTA SIERRA JULIET roger what is your actual level
:06	VH-DSJ	my level is four and a half thousand four five zero zero
:11	FSU	DELTA SIERRA JULIET and confirm you cannot identify the aircraft
:14	VH-DSJ	affirmative
:18	FSU	DELTA SIERRA JULIET roger standby
:28	VH-DSJ	MELBOURNE DELTA SIERRA JULIET it's not an aircraft it is // open microphone for two seconds //
:46	FSU	DELTA SIERRA JULIET MELBOURNE can you describe the er aircraft
1909:52	VH-DSJ	DELTA SIERRA JULIET as it's flying past it's a long shape // open microphone for three seconds // (cannot) identify more than (that it has such speed) // open microphone for 3 seconds // before me right now Melbourne
1910:07	FSU	DELTA SIERRA JULIET roger and how large would the er object be
:20	VH-DSJ	DELTA SIERRA JULIET MELBOURNE it seems like it's stationary what I'm doing right now is orbiting and the thing is just orbiting on top of me also it's got a green light and sort of metallic (like) it's all shiny (on) the outside
:43	FSU	DELTA SIERRA JULIET

6. RELEVANT EVENTS (cont'd)

TIME	FROM	TEXT
:48	VH-DSJ	DELTA SIERRA JULIET // open microphone for 5 seconds // it's just vanished
:57	FSU	DELTA SIERRA JULIET
1911:03	VH-DSJ	MELBOURNE would you know what kind of aircraft I've got is it (a type) military aircraft
:08	FSU	DELTA SIERRA JULIET confirm the er aircraft just vanished
:14	VH-DSJ	SAY AGAIN
:17	FSU	DELTA SIERRA JULIET is the aircraft still with you
:23	VH-DSJ	DELTA SIERRA JULIET (it's ah nor) // open microphone 2 seconds // (now) approaching from the southwest
:37	FSU	DELTA SIERRA JULIET
:52	VH-DSJ	DELTA SIERRA JULIET the engine is is rough idling I've got it set at twenty three twenty four and the thing is (coughing)
1912:04	FSU	DELTA SIERRA JULIET roger what are your intentions
:09	VH-DSJ	my intentions are ah to go to King Island ah Melbourne that strange aircraft is hovering on top of me again // two seconds open microphone // it is hovering and it's not an aircraft
:22	FSU	DELTA SIERRA JULIET
:28	VH-DSJ	DELTA SIERRA JULIET MELBOURNE // 17 seconds open microphone //
:49	FSU	DELTA SIERRA JULIET MELBOURNE

There is no record of any further transmissions from the aircraft.

The weather in the Cape Otway area was clear with a trace of stratocumulus cloud at 5000 to 7000 feet, scattered cirrus cloud at 30000 feet, excellent visibility and light winds. The end of daylight at Cape Otway was at 1918 hours.

The Alert Phase of SAR procedures was declared at 1912 hours and, at 1933 hours when the aircraft did not arrive at King Island, the Distress Phase was declared and search action was commenced. An intensive air, sea and land search was continued until 25 October 1978, but no trace of the aircraft was found.

7. OPINION AS TO CAUSE

The reason for the disappearance of the aircraft has not been determined.

Approved for
publication

A. R. Woodward

(A. R. Woodward)
Delegate of the Secretary

Date

27.4.1982

AW:VF:A/AS(SI)
7.5.82

29

FOLIO

24

10 MAY 1982

Ref M116/783/1047

Director, Vic-Tas Region

ACCIDENT INVOLVING MISSING AIRCRAFT VH-DSJ
ON 21 OCTOBER 1978

Arising from the investigation of this occurrence,
an Aircraft Accident Investigation Summary Report has
been produced and approved for release. Copies of the
Summary Report are attached and should be provided to
the aircraft owner, the operator, the father of the
missing pilot and the Coroner.

11

(J.C. Hopkins)
for Assistant Secretary
(Air Safety Investigation)



10 Copies.

Ref M116/783/1047(2)

DPR


C.C. SECRETARY
DEP SEC (AO)
FAS(FW)
FAS(AO)

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7.5.82


(A.R. Woodward)
A/g Assistant Secretary
(Air Safety Investigation)



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT

AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION SUMMARY REPORT

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

1. LOCATION OF OCCURRENCE

Not known	Height a.m.s.l. -	Date 21.10.78	Time (Local) Not known	Zone EST
-----------	----------------------	------------------	---------------------------	-------------

2. THE AIRCRAFT

Make and Model Cessna 182L	Registration VH-DSJ	Certificate of Airworthiness Valid from 14 February 1968
Certificate of Registration issued to Cephus Day, 33 Reserve Road, Beaumaris, Victoria	Operator SAS Southern Air Services, Northern Avenue, Moorabbin Airport, Victoria	Degree of damage to aircraft Not known Other property damaged -
Defects discovered -		

3. THE FLIGHT

Last or intended departure point Moorabbin	Time of departure 1819 hours	Next point of intended landing King Island	Purpose of flight Travel	Class of operation Private
---	---------------------------------	---	-----------------------------	-------------------------------

4. THE CREW

Name	Status	Age	Class of licence	Hours on type	Total hours	Degree of injury
Frederick VALENTICH	Pilot	20	Private	Not known	150 (Approx.)	Presumed Fatal

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

Name	Status	Degree of injury	Name	Status	Degree of injury

6. RELEVANT EVENTS

The pilot obtained a Class Four instrument rating on 11 May 1978 and he was therefore authorised to operate at night in visual meteorological conditions (VMC). On the afternoon of 21 October 1978 he attended the Moorabbin Briefing Office, obtained a meteorological briefing and, at 1723 hours, submitted a flight plan for a night VMC flight from Moorabbin to King Island and return. The cruising altitude nominated in the flight plan was below 5000 feet, with estimated time intervals of 41 minutes to Cape Otway and 28 minutes from Cape Otway to King Island. The total fuel endurance was shown as 300 minutes. The pilot made no arrangements for aerodrome lighting to be illuminated for his arrival at King Island. He advised the briefing officer and the operator's representative that he was uplifting friends at King Island and took four life jackets in the aircraft with him.

The aircraft was refuelled to capacity at 1810 hours and departed Moorabbin at 1819 hours. After departure the pilot established two-way radio communications with Melbourne Flight Service Unit (FSU).

The pilot reported Cape Otway at 1900 hours and the next transmission received from the aircraft was at 1906:14 hours. The following communications between the aircraft and Melbourne FSU were recorded from this time: (Note: The word/words in brackets are open to other interpretations.)

TIME	FROM	TEXT
1906:14	VH-DSJ	MELBOURNE this is DELTA SIERRA JULIET is there any known traffic below five thousand
:23	FSU	DELTA SIERRA JULIET no known traffic
:26	VH-DSJ	DELTA SIERRA JULIET I am seems (to) be a large aircraft below five thousand

6. RELEVANT EVENTS (cont'd)

25

TIME	FROM	TEXT
:46	FSU	D D DELTA SIERRA JULIET what type of aircraft is it
:50	VH-DSJ	DELTA SIERRA JULIET I cannot affirm it is four bright it seems to me like landing lights
1907:04	FSU	DELTA SIERRA JULIET
:32	VH-DSJ	MELBOURNE this (is) DELTA SIERRA JULIET the aircraft has just passed over over me at least a thousand feet above
:43	FSU	DELTA SIERRA JULIET roger and it it is a large aircraft confirm
:47	VH-DSJ	er unknown due to the speed it's travelling is there any airforce aircraft in the vicinity
:57	FSU	DELTA SIERRA JULIET no known aircraft in the vicinity
1908:18	VH-DSJ	MELBOURNE it's approaching now from due east towards me
:28	FSU	DELTA SIERRA JULIET
:42		// open microphone for two seconds //
:49	VH-DSJ	DELTA SIERRA JULIET it seems to me that he's playing some sort of game he's flying over me two three times at a time at speeds I could not identify
1909:02	FSU	DELTA SIERRA JULIET roger what is your actual level
:06	VH-DSJ	my level is four and a half thousand four five zero zero
:11	FSU	DELTA SIERRA JULIET and confirm you cannot identify the aircraft
:14	VH-DSJ	affirmative
:18	FSU	DELTA SIERRA JULIET roger standby
:28	VH-DSJ	MELBOURNE DELTA SIERRA JULIET it's not an aircraft it is // open microphone for two seconds //
:46	FSU	DELTA SIERRA JULIET MELBOURNE can you describe the er aircraft
1909:52	VH-DSJ	DELTA SIERRA JULIET as it's flying past it's a long shape // open microphone for three seconds // (cannot) identify more than (that it has such speed) // open microphone for 3 seconds // before me right now Melbourne
1910:07	FSU	DELTA SIERRA JULIET roger and how large would the er object be
:20	VH-DSJ	DELTA SIERRA JULIET MELBOURNE it seems like it's stationary what I'm doing right now is orbiting and the thing is just orbiting on top of me also it's got a green light and sort of metallic (like) it's all shiny (on) the outside
:43	FSU	DELTA SIERRA JULIET

6. RELEVANT EVENTS (cont'd)

TIME	FROM	TEXT
:48	VH-DSJ	DELTA SIERRA JULIET // open microphone for 5 seconds // it's just vanished
:57	FSU	DELTA SIERRA JULIET
1911:03	VH-DSJ	MELBOURNE would you know what kind of aircraft I've got is it (a type) military aircraft
:08	FSU	DELTA SIERRA JULIET confirm the er aircraft just vanished
:14	VH-DSJ	SAY AGAIN
:17	FSU	DELTA SIERRA JULIET is the aircraft still with you
:23	VH-DSJ	DELTA SIERRA JULIET (it's ah nor) // open microphone 2 seconds // (now) approaching from the southwest
:37	FSU	DELTA SIERRA JULIET
:52	VH-DSJ	DELTA SIERRA JULIET the engine is is rough idling I've got it set at twenty three twenty four and the thing is (coughing)
1912:04	FSU	DELTA SIERRA JULIET roger what are your intentions
:09	VH-DSJ	my intentions are ah to go to King Island ah Melbourne that strange aircraft is hovering on top of me again // two seconds open microphone // it is hovering and it's not an aircraft
:22	FSU	DELTA SIERRA JULIET
:28	VH-DSJ	DELTA SIERRA JULIET MELBOURNE // 17 seconds open microphone //
:49	FSU	DELTA SIERRA JULIET MELBOURNE

There is no record of any further transmissions from the aircraft.

The weather in the Cape Otway area was clear with a trace of stratocumulus cloud at 5000 to 7000 feet, scattered cirrus cloud at 30000 feet, excellent visibility and light winds. The end of daylight at Cape Otway was at 1918 hours.

The Alert Phase of SAR procedures was declared at 1912 hours and, at 1933 hours when the aircraft did not arrive at King Island, the Distress Phase was declared and search action was commenced. An intensive air, sea and land search was continued until 25 October 1978, but no trace of the aircraft was found.

7. OPINION AS TO CAUSE

The reason for the disappearance of the aircraft has not been determined.

Approved for
publication

A. R. Woodward

(A. R. Woodward)
Delegate of the Secretary

Date

27.4.1982

Ref M116/783/1047(2)

DEP SEC (AO)


DISAPPEARANCE OF CESSNA 182 VH-DSJ

- . You will recall the "Valentich" case which occurred on 21 October 1978
 - it continues to be raised by the media and UFO enthusiasts
 - from time to time the Minister and the Department receives requests for information
 - : we have said on several occasions that we expect to produce a Summary Report when our investigation is completed.
- . A missing aircraft is an accident by Annex 13 and ANR 270 definition
 - our investigation was along the lines followed in a more normal missing aircraft occurrence
 - : UFO aspects are of course a matter for the RAAF
 - it follows therefore that any report issued in respect of an investigation should be in accordance with our normal practice
 - : and copies given to persons with a bona fide interest.
- . I have now approved a summary report in respect of this occurrence
 - it is simply a statement of fact
 - an unedited transcript is included because of the unusual circumstances
 - : you will recall that the transcript was, in this case, released to the media shortly after the aircraft disappeared
 - I intend to provide copies of the summary report to the owner, operator, father of the missing pilot and the Coroner

: and to those parties who have made enquiries
with a more or less bona fide interest.

- . A copy of the summary report is attached for your information
- the matter is brought to your attention at this time
because of the possibility of media interest when
it becomes known that such a report exists.

29.4.82

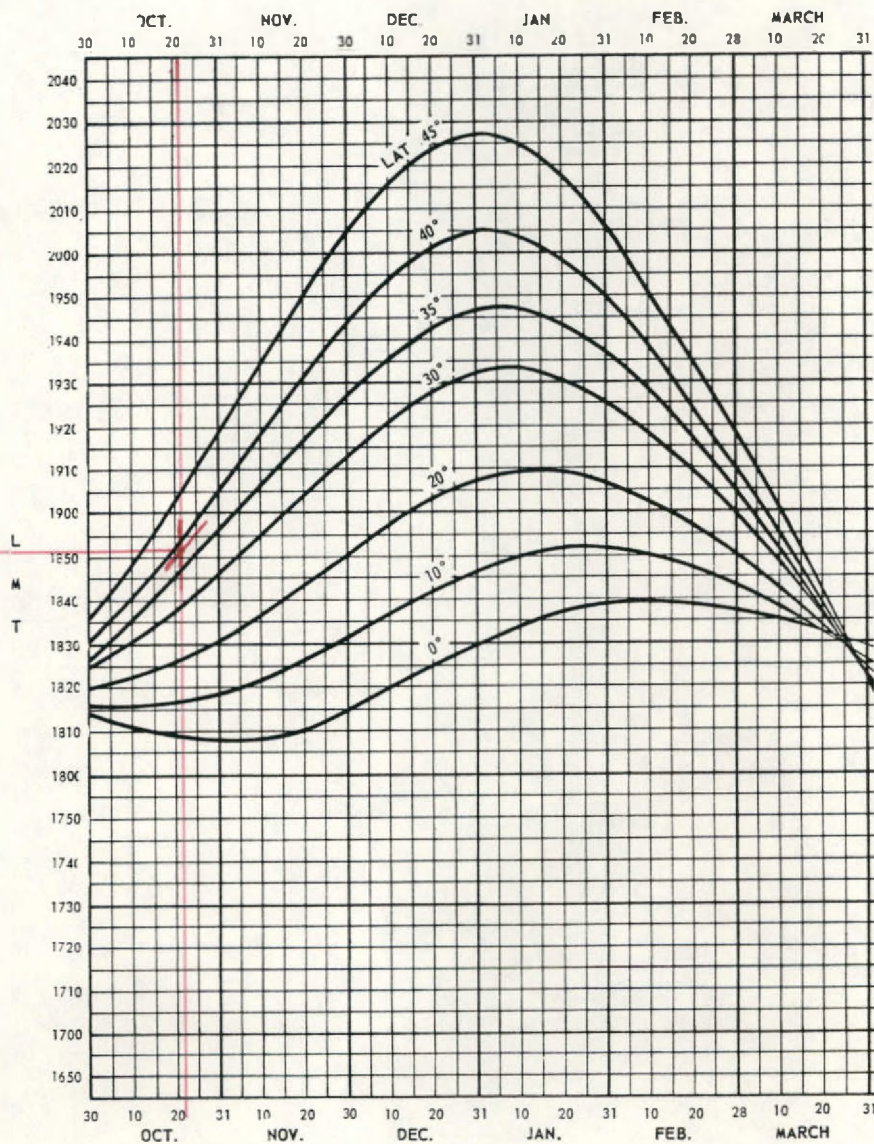

(A.R. Woodward)
A/Assistant Secretary
(Air Safety Investigation)

24-6
3 SEPT 1981

DAYLIGHT AND DARKNESS GRAPHS

VFG AUSTRALIA

END OF DAYLIGHT
SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE



21.10.78 38.52S 143.31E

CONVERSION OF ARC TO TIME

LONGITUDE

DEGREES						MINUTES					
Long. Deg.	Time		Long. Deg.	Time		Long. Mins.	Time		Long. Mins.	Time	
	Hours	Mins.		Hours	Mins.		Mins.	Secs.		Mins.	Secs.
110	7	20	140	9	20	0	0	00	30	2	00
111	7	24	141	9	24	1	0	04	31	2	04
112	7	28	142	9	28	2	0	08	32	2	08
113	7	32	143	9	32	3	0	12	33	2	12
114	7	36	144	9	36	4	0	16	34	2	16
115	7	40	145	9	40	5	0	20	35	2	20
116	7	44	146	9	44	6	0	24	36	2	24
117	7	48	147	9	48	7	0	28	37	2	28
118	7	52	148	9	52	8	0	32	38	2	32
119	7	56	149	9	56	9	0	36	39	2	36
120	8	00	150	10	00	10	0	40	40	2	40
121	8	04	151	10	04	11	0	44	41	2	44
122	8	08	152	10	08	12	0	48	42	2	48
123	8	12	153	10	12	13	0	52	43	2	52
124	8	16	154	10	16	14	0	56	44	2	56
125	8	20	155	10	20	15	1	00	45	3	00
126	8	24	156	10	24	16	1	04	46	3	04
127	8	28	157	10	28	17	1	08	47	3	08
128	8	32	158	10	32	18	1	12	48	3	12
129	8	36	159	10	36	19	1	16	49	3	16
130	8	40				20	1	20	50	3	20
131	8	44				21	1	24	51	3	24
132	8	48				22	1	28	52	3	28
133	8	52				23	1	32	53	3	32
134	8	56				24	1	36	54	3	36
135	9	00				25	1	40	55	3	0
136	9	04				26	1	44	56	3	44
137	9	08				27	1	48	57	3	48
138	9	12				28	1	52	58	3	52
139	9	16				29	1	56	59	3	56

The above table is for converting expressions in arc to their equivalent in time; its main use is for the conversion of longitude for application to LMT (added if west, subtracted if east) to give GMT or vice versa, particularly in the case of beginning and end of daylight.

143°31'E

19

DEPARTMENT OF CIVIL AVIATION

REMOVAL OF PAPERS FROM FILE

(Papers must not be removed by other than Registry staff)

When a paper is removed from a file, this form must be completed and is to replace the paper removed.

One form only is required when a consecutive sequence of papers is removed

PAPER/S TRANSFERRED

The original of enclosure/s 19 has been transferred

to file M123. 1-30 at enclosure/s 49

DESCRIPTION OF TRANSFERRED PAPER/S

☐

Inter-office memo

☐

Letter

☐

Teleprinter

☐

Minute

If other, specify

File Note

OTHER DETAILS

Originator

SIGS(B)

Originator's reference

Date

23. 3. 82

Subject

File Note Telecom J Pike / H. J. KLAVER
22/3/82

13. 4. 82

[Signature]

Registry Officer

18

DEPARTMENT OF CIVIL AVIATION

REMOVAL OF PAPERS FROM FILE

(Papers must not be removed by other than Registry staff)

When a paper is removed from a file, this form must be completed and is to replace the paper removed.

One form only is required when a consecutive sequence of papers is removed

PAPER/S TRANSFERRED

The original of enclosure/s 18 has been transferred
to file M123-1-30 at enclosure/s 48

DESCRIPTION OF TRANSFERRED PAPER/S

☐

Inter-office memo

☒

Letter

☐

Teleprinter

☐

Minute

If other, specify


OTHER DETAILS

Originator AS(Si) / BILL CHALKER

Originator's reference Date 19.2.82

Subject

13, 4, 82



Registry Officer



MINUTE

57

AS(SI) *W2*

- . Please see draft Summary Report
- for your approval.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "J.C. Hopkins", is located above the typed name.

(J.C. Hopkins)
A/DSIG

16/2/1982



MINUTE

16

DSIG

This report was reviewed some time ago - see Part 2, para 3.

2. It has been final coded.

3. J. Pike tells me a decision was made to release a Summary Report.

4. This presents difficulties because of the deficient investigation report - too late to do anything about it now.

5. The attached draft Sumrep is an attempt to satisfy the requirement, whilst avoiding controversial matters as ~~much~~ ^{far} as possible, and within the limits of the report.

6. All requests for info have been answered.

7. Basic distribution of the report recommended

- W. Chalker

- Brown

- Pilot's father

- ~~owner~~

- ~~operator~~

+ copy to Harley Klauer with a letter of thanks for the info provided.

11 February 1982

[Signature]

SLGT

Dr R. F. Haines

OCCURRENCE CODING SHEET

File No. M116/783/1047

Review Officer's assessment. (appropriate sections of the computer record are compiled from this information).

TYPE OF OCCURRENCE Note: If more than two Types of Occurrence are appropriate to the occurrence select the two that provide the best overall description

Type of Occurrence 1st. ... MISSING... AIRCRAFT, NOT RECOVERED...

Phase of Operation 1st. NOT KNOWN

Type of Occurrence 2nd.

Phase of Operation 2nd.

TYPE OF OPERATOR 0401 ! F ! To be completed for PRIVATE category
OPERATORS NAME 0406 SAS SOUTHERN accidents/mishaps where the aircraft
ATR SERVICES has been hired/borrowed. Enter type
& name of hiring organisation

IMPACT ANGLE DEGREES

FACTORS NOT DETERMINED

UNSUBSTANTIATED HUMAN FACTORS

2901	..!..!..!	..	2906	!..!..!..!..!..!..!..!..!..!
2902	..!..!..!	..		!..!..!..!..!..!..!..!..!..!
2903	..!..!..!	..		!..!..!..!..!..!..!..!..!..!
2904	..!..!..!	..		(30 character direct entry to amplify coded
2905	..!..!..!	..		factors if required).

SAFETY DIGEST MATERIAL
YES(Y) NO(N)

Reviewed by: *[Signature]* /SIG T,
Date: 11/2/82



MINUTE

14

Harry

- 1 There is no copy on file of the teletype message, back from Melbourne.
- 2 The signature on L H bottom is from a [redacted] an AO officer here at the time.
- 3 There is no record on file of any RAAF reply.

Jim S.

DS41, S22

R.O. V116/83/1047

8/1/84

MMXYX

HQSCU

ATTENTION SOINTEL

AMMLYL^A ASIB

TEXT.

CONFIRMING TELEPHONE ~~RECEIVED~~ CONVERSATION
OF 23 OCT 1978 NOTIFYING DETAILS OF
C182 VH-DSJ MISSING ON FLIGHT MB
TO KI ON 21 OCT 1978 @

RECORD OF COMMUNICATIONS WITH
AIRCRAFT CONFIRM PILOT REPORTED IN
CLOSE ~~VICINITY~~ ^{PROXIMITY} ~~TO~~ ^{TO} UNIDENTIFIED
AIRCRAFT OVER BASS STRAIT @ NO
OTHER KNOWN AIRCRAFT IN AREA @
DURING SIX MINUTE PERIOD PILOT
IN VISUAL CONTACT WITH UNKNOWN
AIRCRAFT HE MADE TWO REFERENCES
WHICH INFERRED THE OBJECT WAS
NOT AN AIRCRAFT @

REQUEST ANY INFORMATION
WHICH MAY ASSIST INVESTIGATION OF
CIRCUMSTANCES OF MISSING AIRCRAFT

Planned to HQ AirSC for enroute relay 020520
Copy of message for satellite network will be
forwarded to ASSU for info. office

[Signature]
ASSU

24100145

8-12

DEPARTMENT OF CIVIL AVIATION

REMOVAL OF PAPERS FROM FILE

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One form only is required when a consecutive sequence of papers is removed

PAPER/S TRANSFERRED

The original of enclosure/s 8-12 has been transferred
to file M123.1.30 of enclosure/s 47

DESCRIPTION OF TRANSFERRED PAPER/S

☐

Intra-office memo

☒

Letter

☐

Teleprinter

☐

Minute

If other, specify

OTHER DETAILS

Originator

Minister / John West

Originator's reference

Date

6.1.82

Subject

13, 4, 82

[Signature]

Registry Officer

DEPARTMENT OF CIVIL AVIATION

REMOVAL OF PAPERS FROM FILE

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One form only is required when a consecutive sequence of papers is removed

PAPER/S TRANSFERRED

The original of enclosure/s 7 has been transferred
to file M.123.1.30 at enclosure/s 46

DESCRIPTION OF TRANSFERRED PAPER/S

☐

Inter-office memo

☒

Letter

☐

Teleprinter

☐

Minute

If other, specify

OTHER DETAILS

Originator

As(s)

Originator's reference

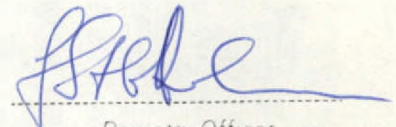
Date

2.1.82

Subject

Reply to H. J. KLAVER

13/4/82



Registry Officer

4-6

DEPARTMENT OF CIVIL AVIATION

REMOVAL OF PAPERS FROM FILE

(Papers must not be removed by other than Registry staff)

When a paper is removed from a file, this form must be completed and is to replace the paper removed.

One form only is required when a consecutive sequence of papers is removed

PAPER/S TRANSFERRED

The original of enclosure/s 4-6 has been transferred

to file M123. 1.30 at enclosure/s 45

DESCRIPTION OF TRANSFERRED PAPER/S

☐

Inter-office memo

☒

Letter

☐

Teleprinter

☐

Minute

If other, specify

OTHER DETAILS

Originator

AS(Si)

Originator's reference

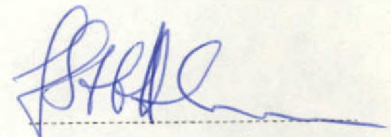
Date

23. 12-81

Subject

Reply to Telecom H-J. KLAVER

13/4/82



Registry Officer



MINUTE

DS/G.

[Handwritten flourish]

The report has been reviewed by SIG3 and myself

- no outstanding matters
- review sheet not attached due retirement of investigator in charge.

Final coding has been carried out some time ago

- no updating needed
- : i.e. missing aircraft, causes not determined.

Suggest that as occurrence is more than 3 years old production of a summary report would not be a ~~useful~~ worthwhile exercise

- because of attendant publicity.

6 Nov 81

[Handwritten signature] SIG5

SIG7

• Let's wait until we hear from
Mr Klaver

- then decide on the Summary
Report.

[Handwritten signature] L DSIG.

30/12

CO

AIR SAFETY INVESTIGATION MINUTE

m116	783	1047	FOLIO
			2

To AS(SI)	From D., V.T.R.	Regional reference V116/783/1047	Registry use only
Subject MISSING AIRCRAFT : CESSNA 182L, VH-DSJ, 21 OCTOBER 1978			Date of despatch 20 OCT 1981

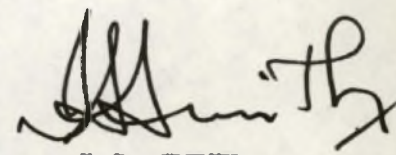
Attached is the report on the investigation of this occurrence

2. Matters arising - The pilot's unusual description of events surrounding his flight was eagerly accepted by the local news media and inaccurate and grossly amplified reports were distributed by news outlets around the world. His immediate family were subjected to unhealthy pressures from the media and unscrupulous charlatans and it is most unlikely that the true state of the pilots environment and personal problems will ever be known.

3. The Region does not intend to take any further action in this matter unless positive factual evidence is obtained.



19 / 10 /1981


I.S. SMITH
for Director

DSIC 20/10/81

NOTE: Matters arising should include Regional comments on at least the following - (a) action taken or intended by the Regional Office; (b) recommendations for consideration in Central Office; and (c) matters on which the parties involved have or will be informed.



Commonwealth of Australia
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT

AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION SUMMARY REPORT

Reference No. **1**
V116/783/1047

1. LOCATION OF ACCIDENT

Not known	Height a.m.s.l. (ft) N/A	Date 21.10.78	Time (Local) 1912	Zone ESuT
-----------	-----------------------------	------------------	----------------------	--------------

2. THE AIRCRAFT

Make and Model Cessna 182L	Registration VH-DSJ	Certificate of Airworthiness 14 February 1968
Certificate of Registration issued to (name and address) Dr. C. Day, 33 Reserve Road, BEAUMARIS. VIC. 3193	Operator (name and address) Southern Air Services, Northern Avenue, Moorabbin Airport, MENTONE.	Degree of damage to aircraft Missing Other property damaged Nil
Defects discovered Aircraft not located.		

3. THE FLIGHT

Last or intended departure point Moorabbin Airport	Time of departure 1819	Next point of intended landing King Island	Purpose of flight Travel	Class of operation Private
---	---------------------------	---	-----------------------------	-------------------------------

4. THE CREW

Name	Status	Age	Class of licence	Hours on type	Total hours	Degree of injury
Frederick VALENTICH	Pilot	20	Private	Not known	In excess of 150	Not Known (missing)

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

Name	Status	Degree of injury	Name	Status	Degree of injury

6. RELEVANT EVENTS

At 1723 hours on 21 October 1978 the pilot of VH-DSJ lodged a flight plan at Moorabbin Briefing Office for a Private Night VMC flight, below 5000 feet, to King Island via Cape Otway and return Moorabbin. Aerodrome lighting at King Island was not requested. The aircraft was refuelled to capacity and departed Moorabbin at 1819 hours. At 1900:29 the pilot reported at Cape Otway to Melbourne Flight Service. At 1906:14 hours the pilot asked Melbourne Flight Service of known traffic. There was none. The pilot then described the manoeuvres of another aircraft or object in and about his immediate vicinity until 1912:28 hours when transmissions from VH-DSJ ceased. No further communications were received from the aircraft. The Distress Phase was declared at 1933 hours when VH-DSJ failed to arrive at King Island and an extensive air, sea and ground search was immediately initiated. The search action was terminated at 1900 hours on 25 October 1978, when all divers efforts failed to locate any wreckage or information of the whereabouts of the aircraft and occupant.

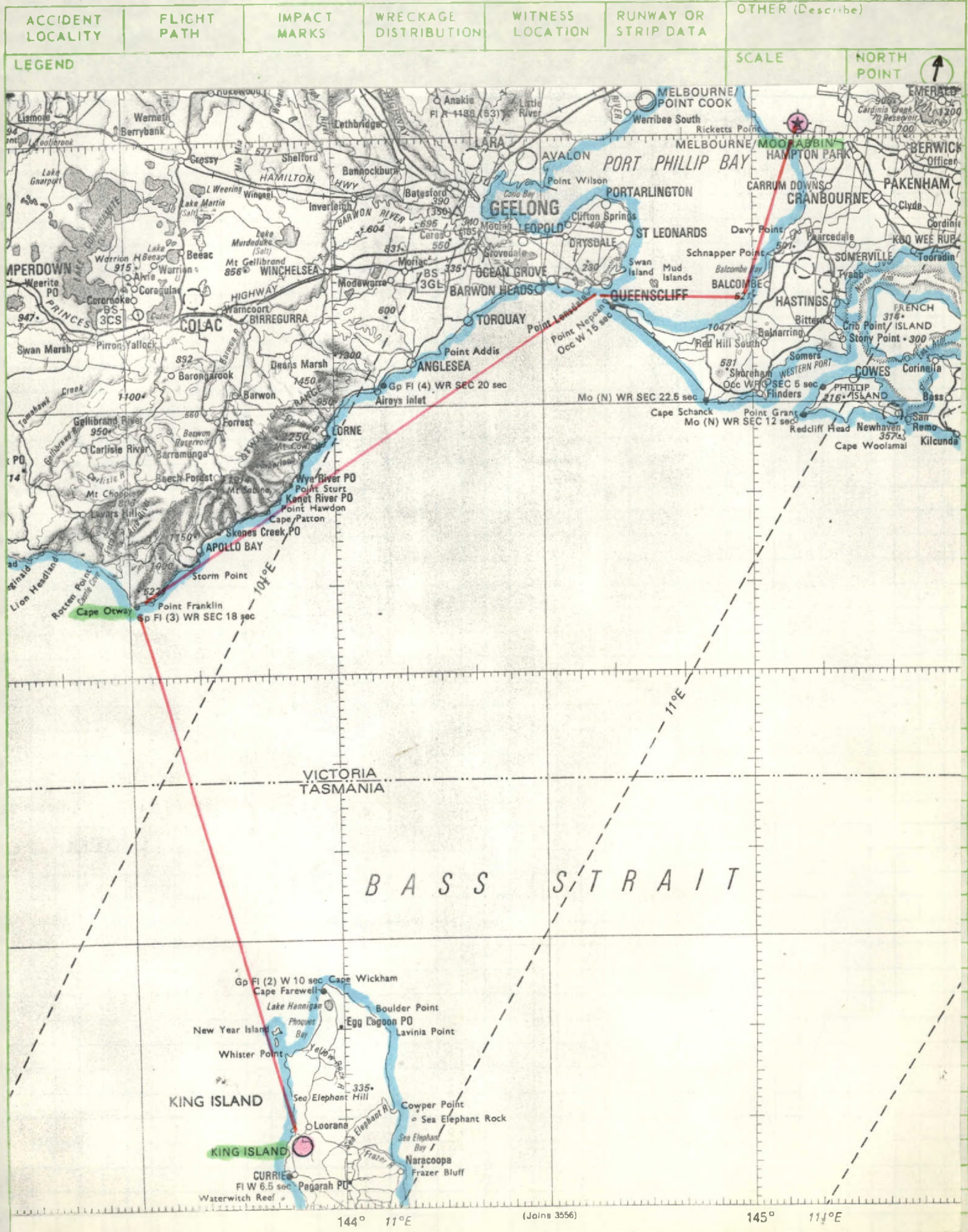
7. OPINION AS TO CAUSE

Not determined - aircraft missing.

8. CHARTS, DIAGRAMS, OR SKETCHES

(Indicate appropriate title)

File V116/783/1047 Page 2



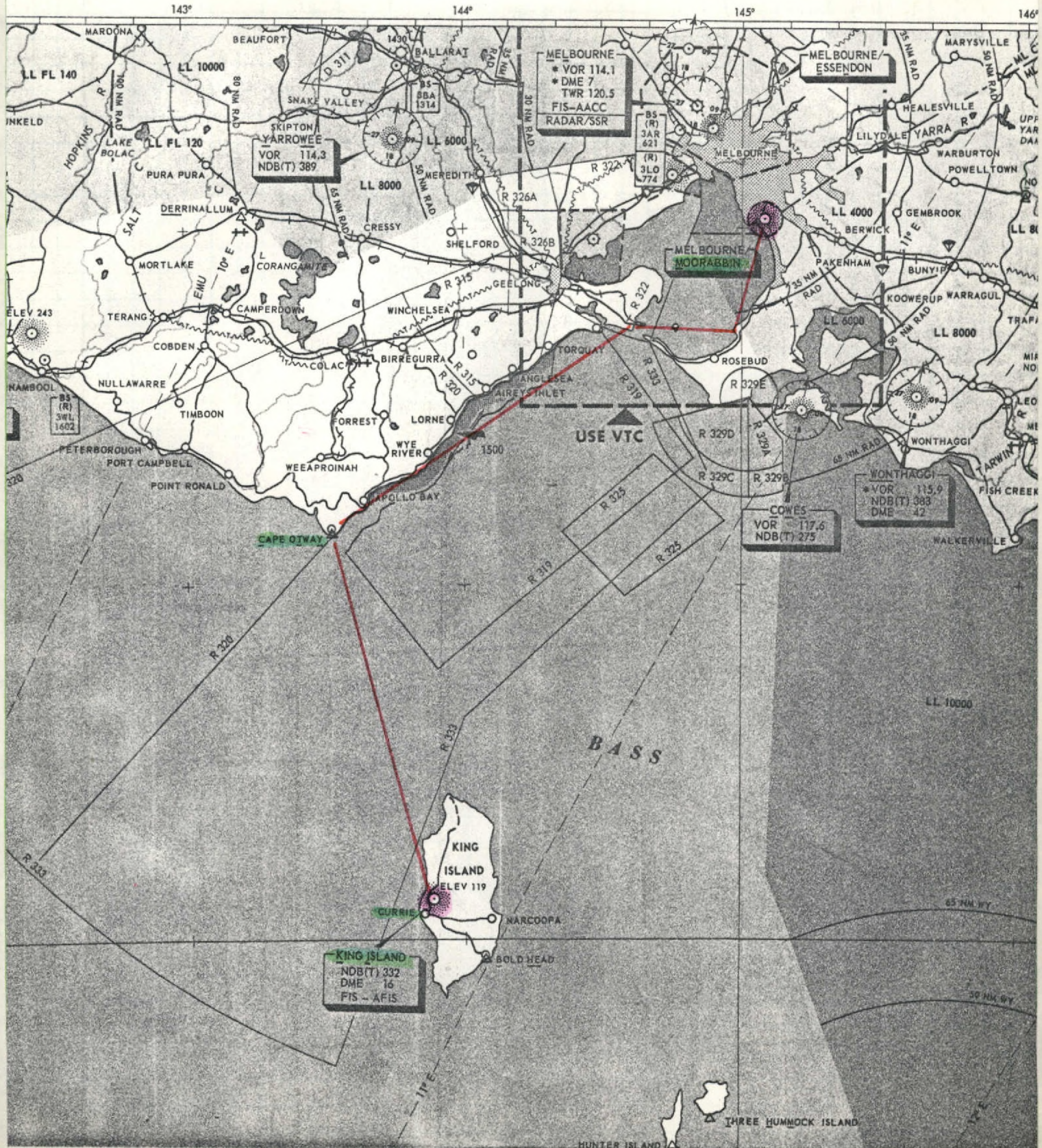
8. CHARTS, DIAGRAMS, OR SKETCHES

(Indicate appropriate title)

File V116/783/1047 Page 3

ACCIDENT LOCALITY	FLIGHT PATH	IMPACT MARKS	WRECKAGE DISTRIBUTION	WITNESS LOCATION	RUNWAY OR STRIP DATA	OTHER (Describe)
LEGEND						SCALE NORTH POINT

VISUAL ENROUTE CHART



10. AIRCRAFT DATA

File
V116/783/1047

Page

4

AIRCRAFT HISTORY

Maint. Release Issued 20.10.78	Current Until 19.10.79	Was it Valid at time of Accident? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	If no, State reason	
Engine Make and Model Continental O-470R		Propeller/Rotor Make and Model McCauley C/S 2A34C66N		
Defective Component	Operating Time (hrs)			Type of Inspection
	Total	Since Overhaul	Since Inspection	
				Major Defect Report No.

AIRCRAFT DAMAGE — List the principal components which were damaged in or as a result of the accident :
describe the mode of damage and indicate degree and cause of damage to each component by inserting
I (impact) F (fire) or O (other) in appropriate R.H. Column. IF REPAIRABLE, WHAT IS ESTIMATE OF COST?

\$

Component	Mode of Damage	Destroyed	Subst- antial	Minor

COLLISION ACCIDENT (other aircraft details)

Registration	Make and model	Damage to Aircraft
Owner		

AIRCRAFT CONTROLS AND EQUIPMENT

Landing Gear	Type	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Wheels	<input type="checkbox"/> Floats	<input type="checkbox"/> Skids	<input type="checkbox"/> Amphibious	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (describe)	
	Position	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fixed	<input type="checkbox"/> Up	<input type="checkbox"/> Down	<input type="checkbox"/> Transit	Selector Position	Indicator Position
Wing Flaps		<input type="checkbox"/> Up	<input type="checkbox"/> Down	Amount	Symmetrical <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Selector Position	Indicator Position
Trim Tabs	Rudder	<input type="checkbox"/> Fixed	<input type="checkbox"/> Neutral	<input type="checkbox"/> Left	<input type="checkbox"/> Right	Amount	Indicator Position
	Elevator	<input type="checkbox"/> Fixed	<input type="checkbox"/> Neutral	<input type="checkbox"/> Up	<input type="checkbox"/> Down	Amount	Indicator Position
	Aileron	<input type="checkbox"/> Fixed	<input type="checkbox"/> Neutral	<input type="checkbox"/> Up (P or S)	<input type="checkbox"/> Down (P or S)	Amount	Indicator Position
Fuel Selector Positions		Port Engine	Centre Engine	Starboard Engine	Recording Tachometer hours		
ANO 20.18 Equipment		Instruments			Electrical		
		<input type="checkbox"/> IFR	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Night VMC	<input type="checkbox"/> Unknown	<input type="checkbox"/> IFR	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Night VMC	<input type="checkbox"/> Unknown
		<input type="checkbox"/> Limited IFR	<input type="checkbox"/> VFR		<input type="checkbox"/> Limited IFR	<input type="checkbox"/> VFR	

Other significant positions or recordings

10. AIRCRAFT DATA (Cont'd)

File
V116/783/1047

Page

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FORWARD FUSELAGE LONGITUDINAL DEFORMATION

NOTE: If fuselage is substantially intact however deformed, select the point on it now furthest forward, describe it and measure the distance along or parallel to the normal longitudinal axis of the aircraft from this point to the front of the pilot's seat when fully forward.

Description of Point (this may also be indicated in photographs at Section 10)

Distance

(mm)

Remarks

11. FLIGHT CREW DATA

PILOT-IN-COMMAND (Surname and initials) VALENTICH, F.	Nationality Australian		Licence No. and type 145103 PPL		Date licence expires 31 January 1979	
	Occupation Shop Assistant		Date of birth 9 June 1958		Licence endorsed for this aircraft <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
INSTRUMENT RATING	Aeroplane	1st Class	Class 1	Class 3	Class 5	None
	Rotorcraft	2nd Class	Class 2	Class 4	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Unknown
INSTRUCTOR RATING	A	B	C		None	Unknown
AGRICULTURAL RATING	Class 1	Class 2			None	Unknown
PILOT EXPERIENCE (hours)	Total	Last two years	Last 90 days	SPECIAL EXPERIENCE (enter total hours or unknown against any significant items)		
Fixed Wing	(in excess of 150 hours)		U/K	Agricultural		Instrument
Rotary Wing				Instruction		Night flying
This type of aircraft	U/K	U/K	U/K	Gliding		Simulator
LAST PROFICIENCY CHECK Date 8 May 1978 Type For issue Class 4 rating.	LICENCE RESTRICTIONS (specify) Nil.			Testing		Command
				Demonstration		
<input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not relevant				Was pilot wearing corrective spectacles at time of accident? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No		
CONTROL SEAT OCCUPIED	Front	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Rear	Left	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Right
DUAL CONTROLS AVAILABLE	Elevator		Aileron	Rudder		Throttle
						Steering
						Brakes
OTHER PILOT (Surname and initials)	Nationality		Licence No. and type		Date licence expires	
	Occupation		Date of birth		Licence endorsed for this aircraft <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	
INSTRUMENT RATING	Aeroplane	1st Class	Class 1	Class 3	Class 5	None
	Rotorcraft	2nd ATP	Class 2	Class 4		Unknown
INSTRUCTOR RATING	A	B	C		None	Unknown
AGRICULTURAL RATING	Class 1	Class 2			None	Unknown
PILOT EXPERIENCE (hours)	Total	Last two years	Last 90 days	SPECIAL EXPERIENCE (enter total hours or unknown against any significant items)		
Fixed Wing				Agricultural		Instrument
Rotary Wing				Instruction		Night flying
This type of aircraft				Gliding		Simulator
LAST PROFICIENCY CHECK Date Type	LICENCE RESTRICTIONS (specify)			Testing		Command
				Demonstration		
<input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not relevant				Was pilot wearing corrective spectacles at time of accident? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
CONTROL SEAT OCCUPIED	Front		Rear	Left		Right
DUAL CONTROLS AVAILABLE	Elevator		Aileron	Rudder		Throttle
						Steering
						Brakes

12. FLIGHT DATA

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FLIGHT PLAN

<input type="checkbox"/> None	Lodged at Moorabbin	Time (hrs) 1723	Was approval required <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	Was approval obtained <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
From Moorabbin	To Moorabbin	Via Cape Otway and King Island	<input type="checkbox"/> IFR <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NGT VMC <input type="checkbox"/> VFR	
EET (Mins) 147	Endurance (Mins) 300	Cons. rate	Height (ft) B050	<input type="checkbox"/> NOSAR
SARTIME (hrs) 1930	To Melbourne Flight Service	Facility Phone		
Com. Frequencies VHF NARCO COM11A. HF REXHTR-5D		Radio-Nav. ADF ARC 521A		
Emergency equipment (describe) Four life jackets				

13. METEOROLOGICAL DATA

METEOROLOGICAL BRIEFING (attach copy of forecast if relevant)				
<input type="checkbox"/> None	<input type="checkbox"/> Route forecast	Other (describe)	Source of met. information Moorabbin Briefing Office	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> In person	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Terminal forecast			
<input type="checkbox"/> By telephone	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Area forecast			
METEOROLOGICAL CONDITIONS AT ACCIDENT SITE Accident site not known.				
Cloud amount/type	Base a.m.s.l.	Visibility kilometres <input type="checkbox"/> Day <input type="checkbox"/> Night <input type="checkbox"/> Dawn <input type="checkbox"/> Dusk	Wind velocity	Temperature °C

14. LOAD DATA

AIRCRAFT WEIGHT (kg)			AIRCRAFT CENTRE OF GRAVITY	
LIMITS	Take off 1270	Landing 1270	Datum Front face of firewall (Station 0.0)	
	Weight (kg) 775	How established Flt. Manual	LIMITS	Aft 47.4" aft of datum
Aircraft basic weight (includes empty weight, oil and removable equipment)			Forward	
Flight crew (No. Pilot)	54.5	Medical 1977	Position at last take off	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unknown
Passengers (No. -)			Position at accident	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unknown
Baggage (Pieces Not known)			AGRICULTURAL HOPPER LOAD	
Freight (Pieces Not known) or Hopper contents			Contents (describe)	
Fuel (litres) 318	222.6	Flt. Manual	Load at impact (kg)	<input type="checkbox"/> Weighed <input type="checkbox"/> Estimated <input type="checkbox"/> Reported <input type="checkbox"/>
Weight at last take off	1052.1	Estimated	Discharge valve position	
Fuel/Load deductions			Dump effected <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If yes, amount (%)	
Weight at accident	Not known			

LOADING CONTROL (describe briefly unsatisfactory features of loading control such as miscalculations, inadequate load security, improperly consigned dangerous goods etc.)

N/A

NARRATIVE (give a concise chronological account of the sequence of events)

At 1723 hours on 21 October 1978, Mr. Frederick Valentich lodged a flight plan at Moorabbin Briefing Office, for a Private Night VMC flight, in VH-DSJ, to King Island via Cape Otway and return to Moorabbin, at altitudes below 5000 feet. ETD Moorabbin was specified as 1745 hours with estimated time intervals of 41 minutes to Cape Otway and 28 minutes to King Island. Fuel endurance was shown at 300 minutes. He discussed the weather forecasts with the Moorabbin Briefing Officer, but he did not make any request for aerodrome lighting to be switched on for his arrival at King Island. It was established that King Island Flight Service Unit had closed, therefore it would be necessary to cancel SAR to Melbourne Flight Service by telephone on arrival. He told the Briefing Officer he was going to King Island to pick up passengers, he was not certain of how many, but would telephone Melbourne Flight Service with his ETD King Island and details of passengers and SAR watch before leaving King Island.

At 1810 hours the aircraft was refuelled to capacity. The pilot did not leave the aircraft during refuelling and the aircraft departed Moorabbin at 1819 hours. Two-way radio communications were then established with Melbourne Flight Service who were responsible for maintaining a communications and SAR watch on the aircraft during the course of its flight.

At 1900:29 hours the pilot of VH-DSJ reported position as Cape Otway and at 1906:14 hours the pilot asked Melbourne Flight Service for known traffic below 5000 feet. He was told there was no known traffic. The pilot then proceeded to describe in detail the various manoeuvres of apparently another aircraft or flying device operating in close vicinity to his aircraft. During the course of his description he stated his altitude to be 4500 feet and at 1911:52 hours he reported that the engine of VH-DSJ was running rough but he intended to continue to King Island. Melbourne Flight Service declared the Alert Phase and initiated action to recall a King Island Flight Service officer to duty and activate King Island Airport Emergency Procedures.

At 1912:28 hours communications from VH-DSJ ceased abruptly and no further communications were received. The Distress Phase was declared at 1933 hours when the aircraft failed to arrive at King Island and an extensive ground sea and air search was immediately initiated. The search action was terminated at 1900 hours on 25 October 1978, after divers and widespread search efforts failed to locate any wreckage or information of the whereabouts of the aircraft and its occupant.

JUSTIFICATION (state concisely the reasons underlying the opinions described in Section 7 of this report, and indicate why this opinion is preferred to the possible alternatives.)

The available evidence indicates that the pilot, Frederick Valentich was rapidly running out of time. He had told his family, girlfriend and associates, that he only had one subject left to pass to gain his Commercial Pilot licence and he was currently going to instructional classes twice a week to study that subject. His father was assisting him financially to obtain his commercial licence.

The names of the ground training organisations he was attending were not established.

On two occasions he sat for and failed all five CPL subjects and during July 1978, sat for three CPL subjects and failed them.

He had penetrated Sydney Control Zone during a flight in July 1978, and just prior to this flight he had received a counselling letter from the New South Wales Region.

Prior to this flight, Valentich had made known his intention, to fly to King Island, for some time, and it was generally believed by his family, girlfriend and his immediate acquaintances that the purpose of the flight was to bring back crayfish.

However, he told the Operator and the Moorabbin Briefing Officer that the purpose of the flight was to bring back passengers. There was no evidence of any passengers at King Island waiting for him to pick up. Nor did he have any orders for crayfish other than one crayfish, from a member of the Air Training Corps. He did not order crayfish from King Island prior to the flight and as it happened at that time, no crayfish were available at King Island.

He told his girlfriend he would meet her at 1930 hours, a time he could not possibly keep. He told his father he would be home after return from King Island.

He did not request aerodrome lighting at King Island for his arrival, but he was aware that King Island Flight Service Unit had closed. It seems possible that he may not have had any intention of proceeding to King Island.

His girlfriend has stated that he perspired profusely and his voice changed in any unexpected or out of the ordinary situation.

It was particularly noticed while monitoring the recorded communications containing his detailed description of the other vehicle's manoeuvres that his voice remained 'matter of fact' and completely normal.

If it had been the pilot's intention to disappear, a number of directions of travel were open to him to maintain communications for the period he did while operating below 5000 feet. (See VHF Coverage Chart, Page).

However, it is unlikely that such a document would have been available to him and his possible tracking directions would be limited to known coverage areas.

Had the flight proceeded as planned and the aircraft did crash into the sea it is most probable that wreckage would have been sighted. The aircraft disappeared without trace and no wreckage was located or information received concerning the whereabouts of the aircraft and its occupant. It therefore is not possible to determine the cause of the disappearance but it seems likely that the aircraft did not crash in the sea between Cape Otway and King Island.

19. ACCIDENT PREVENTION

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(Describe the lessons to be learned from this accident.)

N/A

20. ATTACHMENT CHECK LIST

☒ Witness statement (No.....)☒ Flight plan☐ D.o.T. 461☒ Investigator's notes (No.....)☒ Meteorological reports☐ D.o.T. 462☒ Transcript of communications☒ D.o.T. 225☐ Autopsy report

Special report (describe)

Meteorological Analysis - R.K. Stibbs
Water/Oil Sample Analysis - R.A. Cummins,
Department of Defence


Other (describe)

Radar Aspects - M.J. Harwood
Human Factors Aspects - Dr. B.J. Mahony,
AMHF

21. PARTICIPATION IN THE INVESTIGATION

Name	Affiliation	Wreckage security provided by
P.G. Graham S.G. Spinks A.G. Harris J.C. Sandercock I.S. Smith	Investigator in Charge { Assisting Investigator in { Charge as { required.	N/A Name of first investigator to reach site N/A Date/time of arrival (local) N/A

22. INVESTIGATION RESPONSIBILITY

Name of officer responsible	Signature	Designation	Date
I.S. SMITH		A.S.S.U.	12.10.81

INVESTIGATOR'S NOTE

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Subject

MISSING AIRCRAFT, VH-DSJ, 21 OCTOBER 1978

Darcy Hogan, Briefing Officer, Moorabbin

1. Hogan is in Air Training Corp so he knows Valentich.
2. Arrived briefing office at 5.15 approximately.
 - (a) weather enroute for N/VMC. He didn't know much about N/VMC requirements. He asked if scattered SC at 3000 was OK,
 - (b) no request for lights, and
 - (c) going to pick up passengers and he didn't know how many. He would ring ML with details of POB and SAR EX K.I.
3. Valentich appeared to be in normal frame of mind.
4. No ETD K.I. Would advise ML from K.I.
5. SAR to K.I. Hogan asked if K.I. was open. Since closed he told Valentich that SAR would be to ML by phone.
6. Did nothing about lights and didn't discuss lights with Valentich. Valentich did not mention lights.
7. After Valentich left, Hogan went for a drive around the tarmac and thinks he saw Valentich taxiing VH-WDD to Schutt's tarmac. He is not sure that it was Valentich.
8. Personally he considers Valentich would be an average pilot and of average maturity. Wasn't exceptional in any way.
9. Doesn't know what his drinking and smoking habits were. No close social contact.
10. No mention of UFOs.

P.R. GRAHAM
INVESTIGATOR

24.10.78

INVESTIGATOR'S NOTE

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Subject

MOORABBIN REFUELLING

Rang Tysons 90-6709

VH-DSJ was refuelled on 21.10.78 at 18.10 by Ron Tyson.

247 litres of 80/87

1 litre oil

Filled to brim. Young chap as pilot did not get out of aircraft. Left immediately - saw no more.

Jet fuel is kept in quarantine so it has to be unlocked. He used same tanker to refuel many other aircraft in previous three hours so no chance of incorrect fuel.

S.A.S.

Log Book

After the pilot obtains his licence he cannot leave his log book at S.A.S.

Purpose of Flight

Told S.A.S. he was picking up three passengers but they believe he was getting crayfish.

N.B. S.A.S. do not allow crayfish to be carried in their aircraft.

Return Flight

Not sure but thinks same night probably so that no one would see the crays.

Nav aids

ADF
VHF
HF.

P. GRAHAM
INVESTIGATOR

INVESTIGATOR'S NOTE

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Subject

MISSING AIRCRAFT, VH-DSJ : 21 OCTOBER 1978

Notes of a conversation with the O.I.C. King Island on 24.10.78 (Brian Jones).

He was on duty from 0800-1500 on Saturday.

At 1500 he put through a closing request to ML FS, stating lights out as no planned flights due and no request for lights.

He was pulled out of the golf club by the ML SOC about 19.15 after the aircraft had reported engine problems.

He put the airfield lights on at 19.35.

At the same time his assistant, Graeme Smyth had just arrived to also put the lights on for a departing Cessna 402 aircraft, VH-RCT which had been held up for passengers.

VH-RCT was then used for a quick search around the Island with Graeme Smyth as an observer from 20.00 to 20.25. Nothing sighted. Weather absolutely clear with unlimited visibility.

VH-PDN arrived at about 1800 hours with a band and was due to depart about 0300 the next morning. They have an agent who has a key for the lights.

VH-PDN was used for a quick search at 1000 feet at 20.00 hours to 20.55 hours with Brian Jones as an observer. Could see the Cape Otway lights flashing from the lighthouse as well as all the Island lights. Excellent visibility with a clear sky. No cloud and very starry. Many fishing boats around the Island had their lights on and could be seen for miles.

The normal system for lights is for either the pilot or for Flight Service to ring up beforehand and book them. There had been no request for lights.

Has spoken to the cray fishermen and none were ordered for that night. In fact they had sold out in the afternoon and did not have any left.

The pilot had not booked into the Motel.

They do not recognise the name of the pilot but the aircraft has been down to King Island before.

A.G. HARRIS
INVESTIGATOR

INVESTIGATOR'S NOTE

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Subject

MR. C.P. DAY : KING ISLAND

Notes made following a phone discussion with Mr. Cliff P. Day, a cray fisherman/kelp farmer of King Island on 24.10.78 (004/62-1426).

- He is not cray fishing until next week.
- Last went cray fishing June '78.
- Cannot remember who he sells crays to and the name Valentich means nothing.
- No phone call from Valentich ordering crays and if he had rung there were no crays available from him.
- Unusual for one to expect crays at that time of night but if they had been ordered there would be no problem.

A.G. HARRIS
INVESTIGATOR

24.10.78

INVESTIGATOR'S NOTE

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Subject

MR. K. McCRAWLEY

Kevin McCrawley,
Mess Officer,
ATC HQ Mess 328-3704
Home 458-1119

I spoke to Mr. K. McCrawley on 24.10.78 concerning the report from Mr. G. Valentich, (father of the missing pilot), that his son was going to King Island to pick up lobsters for the Mess. He told me that the Mess had not ordered any crays, however, members may have made private arrangements and he would check it out that night.

Mr. McCrawley phoned me today and stated that S/Ldr Grandy had ordered a cray if Frederick did go to King Island but there had not been any other firm orders.

I.S. SMITH
INVESTIGATOR

Subject

CONVERSATION WITH VINCE ALFONSO

Vince Alfonso flew VH-DSJ on Saturday 21.10.78. He works as LAME for Schutts (90-3033).

- Carried out a Daily Inspection before 6.00 a.m.
- Went on flight MB-French Is-MB at 6.10 a.m.
- Aircraft performed OK.
- There was a bit of a smell from heater but it disappeared after short time. Considered normal.
- On way back from French Island about 10 minutes from MB a passenger pointed out fuel venting from RHS.
- After landing the cap was out of the tank and hanging on the chain. He reported it to S.A.S. but didn't enter it on maintenance release. On Sunday he was at S.A.S. discussing the incident and found out that the cap had been repaired prior to Valentich departing.

P. GRAHAM
INVESTIGATOR

25.10.78

NOTE Don Sowman is checking to find out if cap had been repaired prior to Valentich departing.

Subject

PETER BARNETT : SEARCH AND RESCUE (10.36 HOURS, MONDAY 23 OCTOBER)

Oil Slick Sample

- Fishing boat from Apollo Bay delayed.
- Will not be able to rendezvous with R.A.A.F. aircraft until after lunch.
- Will therefore not know if sample possible until later today.

A.G. HARRIS
INVESTIGATOR

INVESTIGATOR'S NOTE

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Subject

CAPTAIN E.R. BARNES : 25.10.78

- Edwin Robert Barnes, Captain on G159 with Associated Airlines.
- Also ATC RAAF and therefore the contact through Sqn Ldr. Grandy.
- Instructed Fred in Nav and Aircraft Performance and recently MET.
- Never flew with Fred.
- Didn't drink much.
- Has seen Fred angry when he came back from KI and supposedly approach the incorrect runway.
- Fred was quiet until he got to know you.
- Impression - Fred would have had a healthy approach to flying
 - no short cuts.
- UFO's - never mentioned.
- Fred had mentioned his helicopter ride at East Sale.
- Monday 30.10.78 he is available, home - 3546944, work - 3792908.

P. GRAHAM
INVESTIGATOR

147 Essex Street,
Pascoe Vale 3044.
30th October 1978.

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Mr. P. Graham,
Air Safety Investigation Branch,
Regional Headquarters,
108 Lonsdale Street,
Melbourne.

Dear Sir,

In response to your request for a written report of my impression of Frederick Valentich, I have given the matter much thought and have attempted to set out the relevant facts, subsequent assessment and comments in a logical sequence.

I was first introduced to Fred about a year ago by SqnLDR R.F. Grandy who, like myself, is an Air Force Reservist attached to Squadron Headquarters, Air Training Corps. SqnLDR Grandy had known Fred when he was a Cadet in the Corps some years previously, and after he introduced Fred he asked me to read a reference that he had prepared for Fred. I recall him saying that he thought that Fred was worthy of any assistance or advice I may give him.

That evening I spent over an hour with Fred. He explained that he was not accepted for RAAF aircrew, and now wanted to pursue a civilian flying career.

After that first meeting he regularly attended Squadron Headquarters in a civilian capacity, working without pay or allowances until accepted into Squadron staff as an Airman. During that time he was working in my section, and he showed a lot of enthusiasm for the work given him.

He sat for all six CPL examinations early this year, and as he failed all of them he asked if I would tutor him. Although reluctant at first, because of my shortage of spare time, I agreed to assist him in navigation and aircraft performance. He became a regular Sunday afternoon visitor to my home, once bringing his young twin sisters and a couple of times his girl friend, Miss Rhonda Rushton.

On the basis of my involvement with Fred as briefly outlined above, my assessment of him is as follows;

- (i) He always demonstrated responsibility towards his study and other work given to him. I recall his careful supervision of his sisters in my house. He sometimes told me of his in-flight experiences which indicated a responsible attitude towards the command of an aircraft.
- (ii) He was always friendly, neatly dressed, and was of sober habits. Whilst in my company he rarely had more than one alcoholic drink in an evening. I never heard anyone comment adversely on his drinking habits.

- (iii) As indicated above, he appeared to be enthusiastic about his work both at Headquarters and in my home. He frequently spoke of getting an instrument rating and twin endorsement so that he could get a flying job as soon as he obtained his CPL. 19
- (iv) Knowing that he failed to gain selection for RAAF aircrew because he did not possess the required academic qualifications, I nevertheless thought that his academic standard was reasonable, spelling excepted; it was poor. When working through navigation problems I put his frequent mistakes down to impatience and the desire to get his exams over and done with.
- (v) He showed respect to those in authority, and only on one occasion can I recall his making a derogatory comment about any person. That was as a result of Air Traffic Control at Moorabbin raising an ASIR about the way in which he made an approach and landing at Moorabbin after a flight. He was quite annoyed, an admission that he had operated in accordance with the current ATIS.
- (vi) Observing his personal discipline, and from what he told me about the way he conducted himself in the air, I believe that he was developing a healthy flight discipline. As both flight discipline and airmanship are pet subjects of mine, I took every opportunity to advise him in that regard.
- (vii) In summary, I would say that he was impressionable, a "butter", and that he had the determination and stability to achieve his goal of commercial pilot.

I must admit to extreme disappointment on hearing from you today that Fred did not pass the two exams he sat for in mid-year, not because he failed them, but because when I returned from holidays in mid September, he rang me to say that he had passed the exams. Having read my comments in the above paragraphs you will see that I must regard Fred's apparent dishonesty as being completely out of character.

I now wonder if he was ashamed for not having passed the exams, possibly realizing that he would never get his CPL. Because everyone had formed the same high opinion of him, was he a good actor? Did he have a split personality? Could he have really been unstable?

In view of this, together with his mysterious disappearance, is it in any way significant that on the Sunday following his exams he and Rhonda bought two bottles of wine to my home to share that day because he said that he thought he had passed both exams. I declined because I was on "reserve", and said that we would drink them when he was told that he had passed. That was his last visit to my home. Did he know then that he had failed? Was the wine payment to me for my efforts?

Giving Rhonda the friendship ring a week earlier than the "anniversary", reportedly speaking calmly on the radio about a UFO then reporting engine trouble, no lights, passengers or crews organized at King Island; I am now asking myself if he has absconded with the aircraft, or if it was a suicide flight that he had carefully planned for some time.

I trust that the above information is acceptable and may in some way prove helpful to your investigation.

Yours faithfully,
R. Barnes.



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT

AIR SAFETY INCIDENT REPORT

Folio No. 20
Station ML FS
No. 173
Reg. Off. No.
Central Off. No.

Normally this report should be mailed to the Director of the Region in which the incident occurred. If more convenient it may be lodged with the OIC of any Air Traffic Control or Flight Service Unit.

LOCATION OR ROUTE SECTION CAPE OTWAY-KING ISLAND Date 21.10.78 ^{GMT} ~~EST~~ Time 0912

AIRCRAFT: Type and Marking C182 VH-DSJ PILOT: Name and Initials VALENTITH

OWNER/OPERATOR S.A.S. FLIGHT CATEGORY: (underline) VFR NV
IFR

TYPE OF OPERATION (underline applicable type):

Regular Public Transport

Charter

Agriculture

Aerial Work

Private

Aircraft Test Flight

Training Dual

Training Solo

FLIGHT: Last departure point MOORABBIN First point of intended landing KING ISLAND Flt. No.

When this report is submitted by a Departmental officer, enter Fault Report No. (if applicable)

DESCRIBE INCIDENT AND RELEVANT CIRCUMSTANCES, with comment and suggestions:

IMPAIRED OPERATING EFFICIENCY.

AT 210819 VH DSJ DEPARTED MOORABBIN ON A PRIVATE TRAVEL FLIGHT TO KING ISLAND VIA CAPE OTWAY. AT 0900 HE REPORTED OVER CAPE OTWAY PROCEEDING TO KING ISLAND. AT 0906 HE INQUIRED IF THERE WAS ANY KNOWN TRAFFIC B-050. (PLEASE REFER TO ATTACHED TRANSCRIPT FOR EVENTS THAT FOLLOWED.) AT 0912 THE PILOT REPORTED A ROUGH RUNNING MOTOR. ALERT PHASE DECLARED. THE AIRCRAFT THEN MADE A FURTHER REPORT THAT THE U.F.O. WAS STILL IN THE VICINITY. CONTACT WAS THEN LOST WITH THE AIRCRAFT. AT 0913 THE FS3 OPERATOR DECLARED DISTRESS PHASE BUT OPERATIONS ADVISED PHASE WAS TO REMAIN AT ALERT UNTIL ETA KING ISLAND OF 0928. AT 0933 OPERATIONS UPGRADED PHASE TO DISTRESS.

Signed. P.C. Ring Designation A/FS03 Date 21/10/78

NOTE—If you desire an acknowledgement of this report, please place your name and address hereunder. If these details are not given, no acknowledgement of receipt will necessarily be made.

Name

Address

Dear Sir/Madam, Region

Thank you for your Air Safety Incident Report concerning

..... on / /
For future reference it has been allocated No.

Yours faithfully

Date / /

NNNNZCZC MFB5 210732 VVV
FF AMKIYS
FF AMZZRE
210728 AMMBYO
PLN DSJ NV PVT C182 VRHM/BC/H
AMMB FOR AMKI AMMB 0745
CTY B050/41 AMKI 28
CTY 34 AMMB 44
CLIAS 80 LX 300
SARTINE 210930 AMKI AMML PHONE
FURTHER SAR TBA

NNNNZCZC MFA370 210851
FF AMOCYS
210850 AMMBYO
DEP DSJ AMMB FOR AMKI 0819

NNNNZCZC MFB588 210957
SS AMMLYS
SS AMMLYU AMMLZR AMKIYS
210952 AMMLYS
ALERTFA IMPAIRED OPERATING EFFICIENCY
VER DSJ C182 PVT
ATD 0819 AMMB FOR AMKI VIA CTY EET 69(E E E 69 VHER HFN
POB 1 LR 0912 AMML 125.9 PX CTY 0900 B050 AMKI 0928
TPD 0912 RMKS PRIOR TO ROUNT E E E TO ROUGH RUNNING
MOTOR AND LOSS OF CONTACT WITH ACFT PILOT REPORTED
U F O IN HIS VICINITY

NNNNZCZC MFB612 211028 VVV
SS AMMLYV AMKIYS
SS AMMLYV AMKIYS AMLYV AMMOYC
211028 AMMLYU
DETRESFA ROUGH RUNNING MOTOR. OVERDUE ON ETA AMKI
NGT VMC. VH DSJ. C182 PVT ATD 0819 AMMB CTY AMKI EET 69 ENDCE 300
BC VR HN. POB ONE VALENTICH SAS LX. LR 0915 AMML FS 125.9
PX CTY 0900 B050 VISUAL. BLUE BODY WHITE STRIPE WHITE TAIL
ETA AMKI 0928

31 OCT 1978

104739

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT

AIR SAFETY INCIDENT REPORT

Folio No. _____
 Station ML
 No. 388
 Reg. Off. No. _____
 Central Off. No. _____

Normally this report should be mailed to the Director of the Region in which the incident occurred. If more convenient it may be lodged with the OIC of any Air Traffic Control or Flight Service Unit.

LOCATION OR ROUTE SECTION CAPE OTWAY-KING I Date 21 OCT 1978 Local Time 1912
 AIRCRAFT: Type and Marking CESSNA 182 VH DST PILOT: Name and Initials VALENTICH F
 OWNER/OPERATOR SOUTHERN AIR SERVICES FLIGHT CATEGORY: (underline) VER
IFR

TYPE OF OPERATION (underline applicable type):

Regular Public Transport
 Private

Charter
 Aircraft Test Flight

Agriculture
 Training Dual

Aerial Work
 Training Solo

FLIGHT: Last departure point MOORABBIN First point of intended landing KING I Flt. No. _____

When this report is submitted by a Departmental officer, enter Fault Report No. (if applicable) _____
 DESCRIBE INCIDENT AND RELEVANT CIRCUMSTANCES, with comment and suggestions:

ENGINE MALFUNCTION - AIRCRAFT MISSING

- ① AT 010819 GMT, VH DST DEPARTED MOORABBIN FOR KING ISLAND ON A VER/IVY FLIGHT TO KING ISLAND. DST REPORTED CAPE OTWAY AT 0900 WITH AN ETA KING ISLAND OF 0928
- ② AT 0906½ DST REQUESTED INFORMATION OF AN TRAFFIC IN AREA SINCE HE COULD SEE LIGHTS. THE PILOT CONTINUED TO REPORT LIGHTS NEAR HIM UNTIL 0911½ WHEN HE REPORTED AN ENGINE ROUGH RUNNING PROBLEM WITH THE INTENTION OF CONTINUING TO KING ISLAND. THE ~~AREA~~ ALERT PHASE WAS DECLARED AND AERODROME EMERGENCY PROCEDURES ACTIVATED AT KING ISLAND. KING ISLAND FLIGHT SERVICE WAS RECALLED TO DUTY.
- ③ AT 0912½ RADIO CONTACT WAS LOST WITH DST. SINCE THE AIRCRAFT HAD PREVIOUSLY REPORTED CRUISING AT 4500 FT, APPROXIMATELY THE LOWEST LEVEL FOR CONTINUOUS COMMUNICATION WITH MELBOURNE FLIGHT SERVICE IN THIS AREA, THIS MIGHT HAVE BEEN INDICATIVE OF LOSING ALTITUDE.
- ④ THE DISTRESS PHASE WAS DECLARED AT 0933 WITH THE

NOTE—If you desire an acknowledgement of this report, please place your name and address hereunder. If these details are not given, no acknowledgement of receipt will necessarily be made.

Dear Sir/Madam,

Thank you for your Air Safety Incident Report concerning _____

Name _____

Address _____

on / /

For future reference it has been allocated No. _____

Yours faithfully

Date / /

For Director

NON ARRIVAL OF DST AT KING ISLAND.

- ⑤ AN AIR/SEA/GROUND SEARCH WAS MOUNTED IMMEDIATELY WITH THE FIRST AIRCRAFT DEPARTING KING ISLAND FOR A LAND SEARCH AT 1001. THE SEARCH CONTINUED UNTIL 0900 ON THE 25 OCTOBER WITH NO WRECKAGE SIGHTED

- ⑥ WEATHER CONDITIONS IN THE AREA WERE REPORTED AS EXCELLENT WITH LITTLE OR NO CLOUD, LIGHT WINDS AND A CALM SEA. THE FIRST KING ISLAND SEARCH AIRCRAFT REPORTED SEEING THE CAPE OTWAY LIGHT WHEN STILL SOUTH OF CAPE WICKHAM, AT 3000 FT, A VISIBILITY OF ABOUT 60 NM. SUNSET AT CAPE OTWAY WAS AT 0850 LAST LIGHT AT CAPE OTWAY WAS AT 0921 THERE WAS NO MOON BUT VENUS SHOULD HAVE BEEN VISIBLE ON A BEARING OF 255 AT AN ELEVATION OF 25° APPROXIMATELY.

- ⑦ TWO MAJOR PROBLEMS WERE FOUND DURING COURSE

SIGNED

DESIGNATION

DATE: / /

Please note instructions at foot of this page.

FOR DEPARTMENTAL USE ONLY

COMMENTS BY REGIONAL OFFICERS:

SIGNED

DESIGNATION

DATE: / /

ACTION BY REGIONAL INVESTIGATOR:

SIGNED

DESIGNATION

DATE: / /

Any papers or documents which may assist in the investigation of your report should be submitted as attachments to this form. If you think your report can be supplemented by information from an Air Traffic Control or Flight Service Unit where possible please notify the circumstances of the incident, and the fact that a written report is being submitted, to the senior officer on duty at the unit concerned. On receipt of your notification, action will be taken to collect and retain the data relevant to your incident report.

Where it is necessary to urgently report any matter affecting the safety of aircraft you are requested to notify the circumstances of the incident by the quickest available means; i.e., radio, telephone, telegram, etc. This initial notification should be confirmed in writing on this form.



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT

AIR SAFETY INCIDENT REPORT

Folio No.
Station
No.
Reg. Off. No.
Central Off. No.

Normally this report should be mailed to the Director of the Region in which the incident occurred. If more convenient it may be lodged with the OIC of any Air Traffic Control or Flight Service Unit.

LOCATION OR ROUTE SECTION Date Local Time

AIRCRAFT: Type and Marking VH DSJ PILOT: Name and Initials

OWNER/OPERATOR FLIGHT CATEGORY: (underline) VFR
IFR

TYPE OF OPERATION (underline applicable type):

Regular Public Transport
Private

Charter
Aircraft Test Flight

Agriculture
Training Dual

Aerial Work
Training Solo

FLIGHT: Last departure point First point of intended landing Flt. No.

When this report is submitted by a Departmental officer, enter Fault Report No. (if applicable)

DESCRIBE INCIDENT AND RELEVANT CIRCUMSTANCES, with comment and suggestions:

⑦ CONT. (2)
OF THIS SEARCH
A) MUCH SEARCH TIME WAS LOST BY THE OPTIMUM AIRCRAFT,
THE ORION, IN DIRECTING A SURFACE VESSEL TO THE POSITION
OF POSSIBLE OIL SLICK AND DEBRIS FOR RETRIEVAL.
B) WHEN LIGHT AIRCRAFT, WITHOUT INTEGRAL NAVIGATION
SYSTEMS, FOUND POSSIBLE DEBRIS WHEN OUT OF SIGHT OF LAND
THEY HAD TO CLIMB TO FIX POSITION AND IN DOING
SO LOST SIGHT OF DEBRIS.

NOTE--If you desire an acknowledgement of this report, please place your name and address hereunder. If these details are not given, no acknowledgement of receipt will necessarily be made.

Dear Sir/Madam,

Thank you for your Air Safety Incident Report concerning

For future reference it has been allocated No.

Yours faithfully

Date / /

For Director

24/10/78.

24

25

Keith

as per your request, I enclose a plotting chart with the returns around that time according to memory.

Anomalous propagation was present to a certain extent resulting in strong and well defined Oway return (1). A rolling return had been present some time prior to 0900Z but had disappeared well before that time. It was the type of return I understand is associated with Surf (2). The return I considered possibly the Wx return was at the base of R325 and had been there for some time prior to 0900 it remained stationary and was stiff in that position at ^{1100Z} ~~0900Z~~ when I went off shift (3). The only other return was K1 (4).

I had not had any light echo during the period I was controlling on Sec 3 and cannot give an indication of the extent to which they pointed. The four jets which left on the 150k gave strong summary returns throughout.

Charles Wright

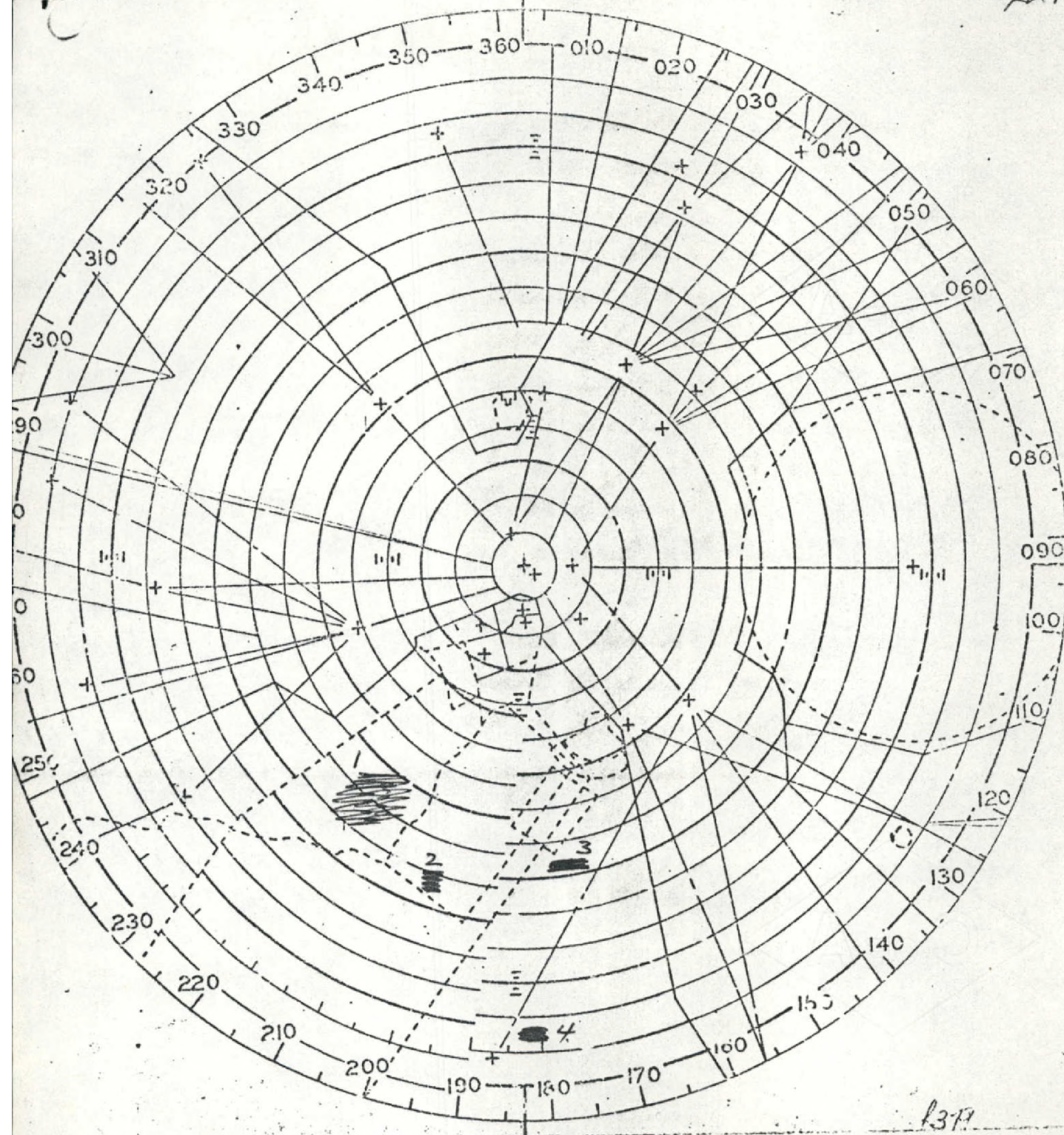
50 NM.

PLOTTING CHART

74.

24A

26



CALL SIGN AND TYPE DSJ FLIGHT SERVICE DATE 21/10/78 TIME 0908Z
 WEATHER REQUEST FOR RADAR ASSISTANCE (MILES)
 REMARKS

FF Addresses		Aircraft Ident. DST		IFR I	Night VMC NV	VFR V	Class of Operation	PVT.	ANR 203	Aircraft Type	C 182
VHF V	R.	HF H	N.	1 ILS A	2 ADF AA	3 VOR BB	4 VOR 1200 MHz CC	DME 1,000 MHz DD	TACAN EE	DOPPLER HH	VARIPADAR VV

Departure Point MB	FOR	Landings Points KI - MB.											0745	ATD
Route Segments	LSALT	FL or ALT	TAS	TR MAG	Wind	HDG MAG	GS	Dist.	ETI	PLN ETA	ATA	GS	ETA next Pos'n	Flt Proc., etc.
MB.	1500	B050	130		340/15									
CTY.	4000			225		232	135	92	41					
KI.	1500			155		155	145	64	28					
		B050.												
KI.	1500				340/15									
CTY.	4000			334		335	115	64	34					
MB.	1500	B050		045		038	124	92	44.					
									137					

ALTN	Alternate	Landing Point	Level	Time Interval	Flight Proc.	Route	LSALT
ALTN	For				Via		
ALTN	For				Via		
ALTN	For				Via		

Remarks FURTHER SAR T.B.A.												
CLIAS 80	IAS	Mach	Survival Beacon	LT	Pilot Status	L	Captain VALENTICH	Company SAS.	Operational Approval			
STAGE	MB-MB.											
12	Min	Gal/lb	Min	Gal/lb	Min	Gal/lb	Min	Gal/lb	Min	Gal/lb		
Climb	10											
Cruise												
Alt												
SUB-TOTAL												
Variable Reserve												
Fixed Reserve	45											
Holding (if req'd)												
Taxi												
Fuel Required Margin	193											
TOTAL ENDC	300											

GENERAL	IF NOT ON FULL REPORTING →	Sortime 0930.	For arrival at KI.	To (A.O. Unit) 12	By (method) 1111E
AVIATION	SURVIVAL GEAR CARRIED →	<input type="checkbox"/> First aid	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Life jackets	<input type="checkbox"/> Emergency rations	<input type="checkbox"/> Water
AIRCRAFT	PHONE NUMBERS AT LANDING POINT	POB /		End of Daylight	

FLOW	X
286	
SAR	F
Approved	GMT

TRANSCRIPT OF RECORDED COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN
CESSNA 182L AIRCRAFT VH-DSJ AND MELBOURNE
FLIGHT SERVICE BETWEEN 0855 HOURS AND 0913
HOURS GMT ON 21 OCTOBER 1978

LEGEND

DSJ

Cessna 182L aircraft VH-DSJ

FS

Melbourne Flight Service Unit

()

Word/s open to other interpretations

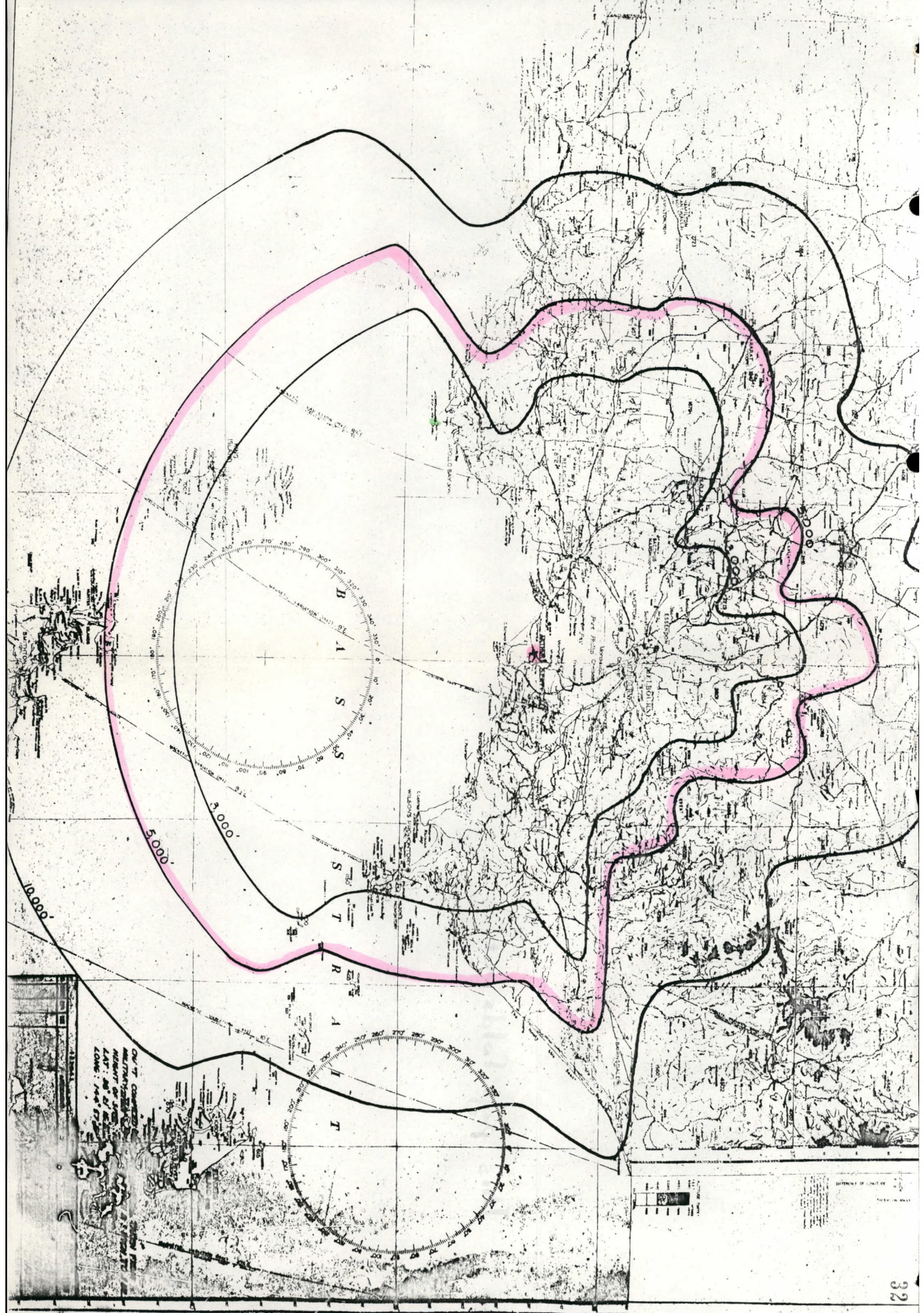
// //

Explanatory note or editorial
insertion

TITLE	FROM	TO	TEXT
0853:30	FS	DSJ	DELTA SIERRA JULIET DO YOU WISH TO EXTEND YOUR SARTIME FOR YOUR ARRIVAL AT KING ISLAND
:38	DSJ	FS	// open microphone 2 seconds // DELTA SIERRA JULIET SAY AGAIN
:42	FS	DSJ	DELTA SIERRA JULIET YOU'RE HOLDING A SARTIME OF ZERO NINE THREE ZERO FOR YOUR ARRIVAL AT KING ISLAND ON TIME INTERVAL YOUR ESTIMATE IS ZERO NINE TWO EIGHT DYOU WOULD YOU LIKE TO EXTEND YOUR SARTIME
:54	DSJ	FS	DELTA SIERRA JULIET AFFIRMATIVE
:58	FS	DSJ	DELTA SIERRA JULIET ROGER MAKE IT ONE ZERO ZERO ZERO
0854:03	DSJ	FS	AFFIRMATIVE
:05	FS	DSJ	DELTA SIERRA JULIET
0900:29	DSJ	FS	MELBOURNE DELTA SIERRA JULIET CAPE OTWAY (DESCENDING FOR) KING ISLAND
:38	FS	DSJ	DELTA SIERRA JULIET
0906:14	DSJ	FS	MELBOURNE THIS IS DELTA SIERRA JULIET IS THERE ANY KNOWN TRAFFIC BELOW FIVE THOUSAND
:23	FS	DSJ	DELTA SIERRA JULIET NO KNOWN TRAFFIC
:26	DSJ	FS	DELTA SIERRA JULIET I AM SEEMS (TO) BE A LARGE AIRCRAFT BELOW FIVE THOUSAND
:46	FS	DSJ	D D DELTA SIERRA JULIET WHAT TYPE OF AIRCRAFT IS IT
:50	DSJ	FS	DELTA SIERRA JULIET I CANNOT AFFIRM IT IS FOUR BRIGHT IT SEEMS TO BE LIKE LANDING LIGHTS
0907:04	FS	DSJ	DELTA SIERRA JULIET
:32	DSJ	FS	MELBOURNE THIS (IS) DELTA SIERRA JULIET THE AIRCRAFT HAS JUST PASSED OVER OVER ME AT LEAST A THOUSAND FEET ABOVE
:43	FS	DSJ	DELTA SIERRA JULIET ROGER AND IT IT IS A LARGE AIRCRAFT CONFIRM
:47	DSJ	FS	ER UNKNOWN DUE TO THE SPEED ITS TRAVELLING IS THERE ANY AIRFORCE AIRCRAFT IN THE VICINITY
:57	FS	DSJ	DELTA SIERRA JULIET NO KNOWN AIRCRAFT IN THE VICINITY

TIME	FROM	TO	TEXT
0908:18	DSJ	FS	MELBOURNE ITS APPROACHING NOW FROM DUE EAST TOWARDS ME
:28	FS	DSJ	DELTA SIERRA JULIET
:42			// open microphone for two seconds //
:49	DSJ	FS	DELTA SIERRA JULIET IT SEEMS TO ME THAT HES PLAYING SOME SORT OF GAME HES FLYING OVER ME TWO THREE TIMES AT A TIME AT SPEEDS I COULD NOT IDENTIFY
0909:02	FS	DSJ	DELTA SIERRA JULIET ROGER WHAT IS YOUR ACTUAL LEVEL
:06	DSJ	FS	MY LEVEL IS FOUR AND A HALF THOUSAND FOUR FIVE ZERO ZERO
:11	FS	DSJ	DELTA SIERRA JULIET AND CONFIRM YOU CANNOT IDENTIFY THE AIRCRAFT
:14	DSJ	FS	AFFIRMATIVE
:18	FS	DSJ	DELTA SIERRA JULIET ROGER STANDBY
:28	DSJ	FS	MELBOURNE DELTA SIERRA JULIET ITS NOT AN AIRCRAFT IT IS // open microphone for two seconds //
:46	FS	DSJ	DELTA SIERRA JULIET MELBOURNE CAN YOU DESCRIBE THE ER AIRCRAFT
:52	DSJ	FS	DELTA SIERRA JULIET AS ITS FLYING FAST ITS A LONG SHAPE // open microphone for three seconds // (CANNOT) IDENTIFY MORE THAN (THAT IT HAS SUCH SPEED) // open microphone for 3 seconds // BEFORE HE RIGHT NOW MELBOURNE
0910:07	FS	DSJ	DELTA SIERRA JULIET ROGER AND HOW LARGE WOULD THE ER OBJECT BE
:20	DSJ	FS	DELTA SIERRA JULIET MELBOURNE IT SEEMS LIKE ITS STATIONARY WHAT IM DOING RIGHT NOW IS ORBITING AND THE THING IS JUST ORBITING ON TOP OF ME ALSO ITS GOT A GREEN LIGHT AND SORT OF METALLIC (LIKE) ITS ALL SHINY (ON) THE OUTSIDE
:43	FS	DSJ	DELTA SIERRA JULIET
:48	DSJ	FS	DELTA SIERRA JULIET // open microphone for 5 seconds // ITS JUST VANISHED
:57	FS	DSJ	DELTA SIERRA JULIET
0911:03	DSJ	FS	MELBOURNE WOULD YOU KNOW WHAT KIND OF AIRCRAFT IVE GOT IS IT (A TYPE) MILITARY AIRCRAFT

TIME	FROM	TO	TEXT
:08	FS	DSJ	DELTA SIERRA JULIET CONFIRM THE ER AIRCRAFT JUST VANISHED
:14	DSJ	FS	SAY AGAIN
:17	FS	DSJ	DELTA SIERRA JULIET IS THE AIRCRAFT STILL WITH YOU
:23	DSJ	FS	DELTA SIERRA JULIET (ITS AN NOR) // open microphone 2 seconds // (NOW) APPROACHING FROM THE SOUTHWEST
:37	FS	DSJ	DELTA SIERRA JULIET
:52	DSJ	FS	DELTA SIERRA JULIET THE ENGINE IS IS ROUGH IDLING IVE GOT IT SET AT TWENTY THREE TWENTY FOUR AND THE THING IS (COUGHING)
0912:04	FS	DSJ	DELTA SIERRA JULIET ROGER WHAT ARE YOUR INTENTIONS
:09	DSJ	FS	MY INTENTIONS ARE AM TO GO TO KING ISLAND AM MELBOURNE THAT STRANGE AIRCRAFT IS HOVERING ON TOP OF ME AGAIN // two second open microphone // IT IS HOVERING AND ITS NOT AN AIRCRAFT
:22	FS	DSJ	DELTA SIERRA JULIET
:28	DSJ	FS	DELTA SIERRA JULIET MELBOURNE // 17 seconds open microphone //
:49	FS	DSJ	DELTA SIERRA JULIET MELBOURNE



This page folds out.

Subject

MISSING AIRCRAFT : VH-DSJ : 21 OCTOBER 1978

Notes made during a preliminary conversation with Mr. Guido Valentich.

Mr. Guido Valentich is the father of Mr. Frederick Valentich. He visited this office on 25.10.78 for the purpose of hearing the tape recording concerning the missing aircraft VH-DSJ in order to identify his son's voice. The following notes were made during general conversation with Mr. Valentich.

- Frederick worked for an Army Disposals firm at Moonee Ponds.
- He was attending lectures for Commercial Pilot Meteorology. These lectures were conducted at Essendon Airport on Tuesday nights and from 1300-1700 hours EST on Saturday afternoons at Moorabbin. He did not know the organisation or lecturer.
- On Friday night 20.10.78 Frederick had retired about 2230 hours EST on Saturday morning 21.10.78. He had eaten a light breakfast of orange juice, cereal and coffee prior to going to work at Moonee Ponds. He would have finished work at 1200 hours EST and driven to Moorabbin to attend the lectures at 1300 hours probably without having eaten any lunch. The lectures were to finish at 1700 hours and he considers that Frederick would have eaten some take away food from a McDonalds hamburger shop near Moorabbin as this is his normal practice. He recalled that Frederick was in normal good spirits on Saturday morning.
- Frederick was a blood donor and gave blood at the City Bank on Tuesday, 17.10.78.
- Frederick's personal doctor was Dr. Pasha of Avondale Heights. He was undergoing treatment for a skin complaint and was taking pills for the complaint.
- Recent employment:

Army Disposals	:	3 weeks
GMH Foundary	:	3.5 months
Commercial Licence Course	:	5.6 months
R.M.I.T.	:	6 months
- Financially, Fred had no problems. As far as known he owed nothing. He was generous to the family on anniversaries, etc. His father assisted Frederick financially with his flying.
- There were no problems at home. Frederick did his share of the home duties.
- Frederick was in the Air Training Corp as a cadet and then as an instructor. He applied for a position as Radio Tech. in the RAAF about 1976 but was not successful.
- He wanted a career in aviation and since he missed out on the RAAF, decided to finish his Commercial Licence and eventually get into Airlines. He wanted to show everyone, including the RAAF, that he could do it.
- Frederick always had the idea that some people wanted to stop him succeeding so he didn't discuss his flying or intentions with anyone. He just wanted to get through and surprise everyone by showing them that he could actually do it.

CONTINUATION SHEET	Section No.	Title INVESTIGATOR'S NOTE	File V116/783/1047	Page 2	34
SUBJECT					
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Frederick was a firm believer in UFOs. He had saved articles and information on UFOs, read "Chariot of the Gods" and other books and went to see movies on the subject. This interest started when he was at school about six years ago. His belief had been strengthened recently when he was allowed to see the RAAF's confidential files on UFOs at East Sale and at Laverton. He wouldn't discuss these details with his family as they were confidential.- His mother saw a UFO one night. She called Fred and he saw it too. It was a large light, ten times larger than a star, was stationary for a while and then moved off at a great speed. This happened about eight months ago.- His father eventually became convinced that UFOs existed.- Frederick worried about attack from UFOs and what they could do. His father had told him there was nothing they could do and so no point in worrying.- His father is unsure about what Rhonda Rushton (Frederick's girlfriend) had said about them going out on Saturday night (21.10.78). He knows Fred was going to be home and thinks something about her statement is fishy but doesn't know what.- Fred's memory was good for important matters but he sometimes overlooked unimportant things.					
<p>P. GRAHAM INVESTIGATOR</p>					

Subject

MISSING AIRCRAFT, VH-DSJ : 21 OCTOBER 1978

Discussion with Miss R. Rushton on 24 October 1978

Miss Rhonda Rushton of 3 Bradford Avenue, Preston (telephone 411-2479) was a close friend of the pilot of C182L, VH-DSJ which became missing on 21 October, 1978. She visited the Regional Office and agreed to assist in the investigation concerning the aircraft and the possible actions taken by the pilot.

Miss Rushton stated she was "just 17" years of age, and that she worked at the Night-Owl Pharmacy of 743A Gilbert Road, Reservoir.

She advised she last saw Fred Valentich on Friday night, 20 October 1978, at about 9.00 p.m. EST, after he had finished work at the Army Disposals, 139 Puckle Street, Moonee Ponds. In their conversation it became evident to her that he had forgotten he said he would take her out on Saturday night. The forthcoming flight to King Island was discussed, and together they evolved the schedule of: departure Moorabbin 1600, land King Island 1730, pick up crayfish, leave 1800, land Moorabbin 1930. As it was a 20 minute drive from the airport to Preston she suggested Valentich put his good clothes in which to take her out, in his car when he left home early on Saturday.

Since the aircraft went missing, she had seen the car at Moorabbin, and was aware that no clothes were in it. From her experience, Valentich was probably wearing a tri-coloured brown and white jumper and brown slacks, his usual flying clothing and she believed he would have carried with him a blue, short raincoat, very similar to those worn by RAAF personnel, as this was his "good luck coat" (his words).

Discussing possible movements of Valentich during the day she believed he would have left home, without having breakfast, gone to work, not eaten luncheon, then gone to the tutorial classes for his Commercial Pilot Licence, at Moorabbin, and stayed there (as she was now aware) until about 1700 EST. Most probably the pilot then went to MacDonald's take away food store near Southland, on the Nepean Highway to purchase food. She believed he would have ordered "two Big Macs, two cheeseburgers, a fillet of fish and some chips", and most probably would have drank a carton of Coca-Cola.

Miss Rushton said Valentich was a "big eater" and that he always ate slowly, and she believed he would have driven to the beach and sat in his car facing the sea while eating.

Asked concerning Valentich drinking habit, she stated he never had more than two alcoholic drinks, usually beer, and after these he remained on soft drink. She then volunteered the information that Valentich "wasn't himself Friday night". That usually he is cheerful, and outwardly very happy, but underneath on Friday he was not quite in the spirit of things.

To her knowledge his health was good, he didn't have a cold or other minor physical ailments, and so far as she was aware he was not taking any self medication for such complaints. The only thing she could offer was that he was taking Comycin capsules for a facial rash, and that he was not to partake of dairy products.

CONTINUATION SHEET	Section No.	Title INVESTIGATOR'S NOTE	File # 16/783/1047	Page 2 36
SUBJECT				
<p>Concerning the flight of 21 October 1978, Valentich had not discussed it with her to any degree but she was now aware he had discussed it with her mother, apparently while waiting for her at some previous time. The gist of the conversation had been that he had earlier intended to take his father on the flight; that he was "scared of the water" (her words) and that the "plane is an old one" (his words). Miss Rushton was aware her boyfriend had made the flight Moorabbin to King Island before but she was uncertain if he had flown the route at night.</p>				
<p>One strange thing had occurred a week earlier, they were in the habit of celebrating the monthly anniversary of their meeting and for the fifth anniversary Valentich had decided to give her a friendship ring. Although he was well aware of the date of the anniversary (20 October), despite her protestations he had insisted giving it to her on 13 October. He apparently had told his friends of his intent to give her the ring. She had no explanation for his action.</p>				
<p>Asked had she flown with Valentich before, she said she had many times, but never at night. One notable flight had been in a Cessna aircraft to Newcastle about 8-10 weeks ago. Originally four other passengers were to have been at Moorabbin at 0400 hours, but they had not shown up by 0600 hours and Valentich had gone without them. The flight to Newcastle, (Aeropelican airstrip) had been uneventful but they had had to fly over solid cloud for about a half hour. They had found a hole and descended through it.</p>				
<p>She considered that as a flight plan had to be submitted at Bankstown for the return flight to Moorabbin, Valentich had flown to Bankstown, and entered the "Sydney Restricted Zone, as told to do so by Sydney". Valentich had experienced difficulty landing the aircraft and had to make several attempts. The reason was that the "control column was locked". Valentich had sweated profusely in this situation, such that she had used his handkerchief to mop his brow to prevent the sweat blurring his vision. She stated that he always sweated when something unexpected or a little out of the ordinary occurred and she was aware of the change in her boyfriend's voice when these situations arose.</p>				
<p>Other flights she had made with Valentich were from Moorabbin to Essendon, and back by various routes, sight-seeing the city's prominent features. She said she was impressed by what Valentich knew of aircraft, and that she considered him to be "a very good pilot".</p>				
<p>However, she was aware of some unusual habits he had while flying. These concerned the use of the radio. She was aware he usually "clicked" the microphone button after transmitting, and that he never put it back in the rack, but left the microphone on his lap where, because of his leg actions, it was sometimes activated. He also had the habit of polishing or rubbing the microphone on his jumper sleeve before using it.</p>				
<p>She stated Valentich had long legs and that after a period of time it was his habit to release the seat and to push it rearward, which again sometimes operated the microphone on his lap. She was of the opinion the "metallic noise" mentioned in the newspaper could have been the seat sliding rearward, with the microphone transmitting.</p>				
<p>Miss Rushton had no knowledge of how Valentich used the engine to fly, when asked. She then said she considered he was "usually overcautious", that he likes to think things well ahead and believed that he would have entered the aircraft wearing the life jacket. She said Valentich always had a plan to cover possible emergencies, she had frequently been told when flying that "if anything goes wrong, look for a straight road or a long paddock without fences" (Valentich's</p>				

CONTINUATION SHEET	Section No.	Title INVESTIGATOR'S NOTE	File V116/783/1047	Page 3 37
--------------------	-------------	------------------------------	-----------------------	--------------

SUBJECT

words). She said Valentich always thought before he acted, albeit rapidly, he never acted instinctively.

The matter of unidentified flying objects, then the subject of such media coverage, was raised. She advised that when out driving in the Dandenong Ranges on Sunday 15 October 1978, Valentich had said to her, "if a UFO landed in front of me now, I would go in it, but never without you". Other subjects had been discussed during the drive, mainly of social interest, but Valentich had commented to some length on the subject of "everybody is out to grab money - there is not enough left for everybody - people would have to starve".

Miss Rushton was aware Valentich had clippings on UFO's but she didn't consider him an avid collector, but just with an average interest on the subject.

The reference to a landing UFO, on 15 October was his only reference to the subject on that day, and on other occasions such references have been very short and never in any depth.

Asked concerning his personality, Miss Rushton said Valentich held problems "in the back of his mind", and that he "held them as a list", and when he had worked out a solution, he mentally crossed it off.

He had lied to her very soon after their first meeting, that he had passed his meteorology subject for his commercial licence, and after four months he had admitted to his lie, and that he was repeating the subject. She said he had "no-one to talk his problems out with", but she was aware he had long talks with a Robert Barns, about flying and flying problems.

Miss Rushton was thanked for her assistance.

J.C. SANDERCOCK
INVESTIGATOR

Subject

INVESTIGATOR'S ASSESSMENT OF MISS RUSHTON

Miss Rushton was considered by the investigator to be an honest and dependable witness. Although young she was seen to be a stable person for her years. She obviously cared greatly for Valentich and in the time of her acquaintance was proud to be associated with him, as a pilot and because of his physique and his association with the Victorian Squadron of the Air Training Corps. To some extent this shows a measure of her being impressionable, but not outside her years.

The investigator gained the impression that Valentich had chosen Miss Rushton carefully, as someone to discuss his problems with, she being receptive, perhaps more so than a girl of 18-20 years, who might have rejected his problems and ideas and pushed him aside.

The impression was gained that Miss Rushton was becoming aware that Valentich was "different" from her other male acquaintances and that she was being used as a "prop", based on the phrase used and the tone of some of her comments.

J.C. SANDERCOCK
INVESTIGATOR

Subject

MISSING AIRCRAFT, VH-DSJ : 21 OCTOBER 1978

Discussion with Mr. Gregory Reaburn

Mr. Reaburn is a personal friend of Mr. Fred Valentich. They have been friends for seven or eight years. Mr. Reaburn visited Regional Office for the purpose of giving background information on Mr. Valentich. During an informal discussion he gave the following information.

- They had been in the Air Training Corps, together for some years and both were very interested in weapons.
- The two saw each other on average twice a week. This was on Tuesdays and Fridays when they attended the Air Training Corps.
- Valentich told him that he had applied to join the RAAF as aircrew but that he had not been accepted because of inadequate educational qualifications. After further education he had tried again but was still not accepted. The two were in camp together in August 1978 at RAAF East Sale when Valentich confided he had been knocked back by the RAAF for the second time.
- Valentich was disappointed about not getting into the RAAF and it had made him quite determined to get his Commercial Pilot's licence and fly for the airlines just to show the RAAF he could do it.
- Valentich had been going with his girlfriend for five months and they were very close. He had recently given her a friendship ring.
- Mr. Reaburn thought it would be quite out of the question that Valentich would commit suicide or purposely fly the aircraft to a remote location to get away from society. Valentich was far too close to his family, girlfriend and friends to contemplate such actions.
- Concerning Valentich's family situation, Mr. Reaburn said he knew Valentich's father was helping out financially with his son's flying and he also knew that there had been a family argument recently. He did not know what the argument was about. Valentich was living at home and in general Reaburn thought the family was very close.
- Concerning health, to his knowledge Valentich was not on any form of self medication. He had never known him to suffer from fits or turns, to pass out or have hallucinations. Valentich did suffer from a skin complaint and had been told by his doctor not to drink too much milk because of this complaint.
- Valentich was very strict regarding alcohol/flying. He never took much alcohol at all and would never take any after 2000-2100 hours of an evening prior to flying the next day. He was most definitely not part of the drug scene. Reaburn considered that Valentich was the sort of person who would go straight to the police if he knew of anyone who was on drugs.

CONTINUATION SHEET	Section No.	Title INVESTIGATOR'S NOTE	File V116/783/1047	Page 2	40
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SUBJECT

- Reaburn was aware that Valentich had planned to fly to King Island but he did not know on what particular day. He knew that Valentich was going to bring back a crayfish for the OIC of the Air Training Corps (Squadron Grandy) but he had only found this out since the aircraft disappeared.
- He had only ever flown with Valentich on one occasion and that was in a helicopter during their camp at East Sale in August 1978. Some of the pilots from Longford are involved with the Air Training Corps at East Sale and one of these pilots had taken them up in a helicopter. Valentich had flown the helicopter and according to Reaburn, the pilot said Valentich flew it well.
- Reaburn said he was aware that Valentich had flown to Newcastle and back since they had been in camp at East Sale, during August. Reaburn had been asked to go but he could not afford his share of the cost.
- His general impression of Valentich's character was that he is not prone to hasty decisions or panic. He always stops and thinks about the situation before taking any action. They had once been lost in the bush together whilst on an Air Training Corps camp and Valentich had not been the slightest bit perturbed about it.
- Both he and Valentich believed in UFOs but not to any fanatical extent. They had discussed UFOs and their beliefs were on the basis that if people on earth are capable of sending space vehicles to Mars and the moon then why would inhabitants of another planet not be capable of the same thing.
- Reaburn was sure that Valentich would have been wearing his life jacket on the trip to King Island. Valentich was not keen about flying over water and if ever he had any choice in the matter he would fly over land. This was because Valentich was not a good swimmer and would probably just give up if he had to come down in the water.
- Reaburn thought that some of the circumstances were a little strange. Valentich had arranged to pick up his girlfriend at 7.30 p.m. to take her out but he had also told his father that he would be home from flying at 10.00 p.m. Such a dual arrangement was very uncharacteristic of Valentich, yet there was absolutely no way he could pick up his girlfriend at 7.30 p.m. If ever he was going to be late for an appointment he would advise those concerned by way of a phone call. Reaburn was also wondering what Valentich did with the time between finishing his lecture at Moorabbin 1700 hours and taking off 1820 hours. He thought that Valentich may have gone to McDonalds for some take-away food which he did on occasions.
- Valentich did not gamble at all, nor was he in any financial bother, to Reaburn's knowledge. He had no police record or any problems that would be causing him any deep concern. He was studying hard for his meteorology exam and was worried as to whether he could pass it.
- Valentich joined the Air Training Corp some three years later than Reaburn and did not get promoted beyond Cadet IAC. Reaburn did not consider this significant; nor did he think it bothered Valentich in any way.
- Valentich had never spoken to Reaburn about being disorientated in an aircraft either during his training or since he had obtained his licence.

S.G. SPINKS
INVESTIGATOR

FREDERICK VALENTICH - HISTORY1958

- 9 June date of birth

1971

- Keilor Heights High School

1974

- Left school at end of Form 4
Results at end of Form 4
 - "Excellent" - Physical Education
 - "Above Average" -
 - "Average" - Italian, History, Metal Work
 - "Below Average" - Geography, English, Science, Graphics
 - "Fail" - Maths A, Maths B

1975

- (Believed to have been studying for leaving Certificate)

1976

- + (Believed to have been studying for Leaving Certificate)
- + Applied to RAAF
Test Results - "very low scores, indicative low I.Q. fit for unskilled work only".

1977

- Enrolled RMIT - electronics, maths physics
- Withdrew from RMIT in July
- Student Pilot Licence issued 24.2.77
- Solo June
- Theory Exam result passed "Basic Aeronautical Knowledge" at third attempt 11.8.77
- Flight Test result passed "Restricted Private Pilot" at second attempt September
- Restricted PPL issued 23.9.77 with 57 flying hours
- PPL Theory Exam results
 - 'Nav' passed at second attempt

'Met' passed at first attempt
'Aircraft Performance and Operation' passed at fifth attempt.
'Air Legislation' passed at third attempt.

- CPL Theory Exam results - October 1977 - sat for and failed all five exams.

1978

- Passed PPL Navigation test flight at second attempt 19.1.78
- PPL Area Restriction lifted 27.1.78 at 89 hours
- CPL Theory Exam results April 1978 - sat for and failed all five exams
- Class 4 Instrument Rating issued 11.5.78 at 147 hours
- CPL Theory exam results July 1978 - Sat for and failed three exams - did not sit others
- July 1978 involved in two incidents at 160 hours
 - 1) Penetration of SY Control Zone due poor navigation. Warning letter sent to him.
 - 2) On two occasions deliberately flew into cloud. Prosecution was being considered.
- Aircraft VH-DSJ and pilot disappeared on 21.10.78

Other Points

- Pilot log book not found.
- At time of disappearance he was working as a shop assistant but devoting most of his energy to flying.
- As a boy he had been an Air Training Corps cadet.
- In 1977 after he had started flying he returned to the Corps as an unpaid civilian helper.
- He later was taken on with the rank of Airman. *teaching ATC trainees in airmanship, service knowledge, General history of RAAF.*
- He was well thought of by friends and acquaintances.
- He was determined to succeed as a pilot.
- He told everybody he had passed some CPL theory exams.

INVESTIGATOR'S NOTE

File

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Subject

EDUCATION : F. VALENTICH : 26.10.78

Enrolment and study R.M.I.T. 1977

Subjects: Circuit Theory 1 hour
 Electronics 1 hour
 Electronic Circuits 1 hour
 Mathematics 1 hour
 Physics 1 hour
 Communications and Report Writing

On 12.7.77 he withdrew from Electronics and Electronic Circuits.
On 22.7.77 he withdrew completely. Reason given as commencing Commercial and Senior Commercial Pilot Course.

Keilor Heights High School

From Deputy Principal

Form 4 in 1974 (Intermediate Standard)
Left school at Form 4 level in 1974.

Results Form 4:	Physical Education	"A"	
	Italian	"C"	
	Geography	"D"	
	English	"D"	
	Maths A	"Fail"	} difficulty in comprehension
	Maths B	"Fail"	
	Metalwork	"C"	
	Science	"D"	lacks understanding
	History	"C"	difficulty with expression
	Graphics	"D"	

A - Excellent
B - Above Average
C - Average
D - Below Average
Fail - Unacceptable Level

P. GRAHAM
INVESTIGATOR

Subject

R.A.A.F. CONFIDENTIAL REPORT

Re F. Valentich.

- Applied for RAAF in 1976.
- At time was repeating leaving.
- Was Aptitude and Psych. tested 24.5.76.
- Was only interested in being trained as a Radio Tech.
- Scores on tests were very low - indicative of a low I.Q. (failed all tests).
- Considered fit for unskilled work only.
- Dossiers kept for two years - his has been destroyed.
- A computer printout on him is held by RAAF - they would supply us with what info they have on formal request.

P. GRAHAM
INVESTIGATOR

Subject

COMMERCIAL PILOT LICENCE EXAMINATION : F. VALENTICH

History of examination enrolments and results of Frederick Valentich.

Exam 1 of March 1978

Enrolled for all five Commercial subjects and Senior Commercial Met.

Results - Failed all subjects.

Exam 2 of July 1978

Enrolled for Nav, Performance and Engines.

Results - failed all subjects.

Exam 3 of November 1978

Enrolled Com. Met, Principles of Flt and Senior Com. Met.

P. GRAHAM
INVESTIGATOR

INVESTIGATOR'S NOTE

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Subject

MISSING AIRCRAFT : VH-DSV : 21 OCTOBER 1978

Conversation with Don SowmanLog Book: Not at S.A.S.Standard:

- Failed him first time Unrestricted.
- Average only.
- OK on instruments.
- No mention of UFOs.
- Not a drinker that he knows.
- Financially - ran up a \$500 bill but he paid it out before this trip.
- No mention of problems or disturbances.
- Seemed vague at times.
- Didn't know him well.

VH-DSJ:

- 100 hourly on Friday 20.10.78.
- Flown by V. Alfonso on Saturday 21.10.78 who works at Schutts (Brents).
- No autopilot.
- Single ADF.
- No strobe.
- One rotation beacon on tail.

Payment of Bill:

- S.A.S. asked him about account when it was \$360. He said his passengers to SY had given him a little money prior to flight but not all and he would have to chase it up.

Note: Only Valentich and girlfriend went. No passengers.

P. GRAHAM
INVESTIGATOR

INVESTIGATOR'S NOTE

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Subject

VH-DSJ : RADIO EQUIPMENT

Spoke to Ken Novity and Instructor, Mr. Day of Southern Air Re VH-DSJ communication equipment at 1445 EST on 23.10.78.

- DSJ has VHF HF and is equipped with a speaker and hand held microphone.
- Valentich was not carrying a headset when he went out to the aircraft prior to departure on this trip and did not have a bag that would carry one.
- Passed to SIGS(B) at 1500 EST.

P. GRAHAM
INVESTIGATOR

23.10.78

Subject

CONVERSATIONS WITH SAS INSTRUCTORS AND PILOTS

Warren Dunlop

- Valentich was sensible pilot.
- Didn't drink.
- No mention of drugs.
- No mention of UFOs.

Martin Dalton

- Quiet, sincere, sensible.
- Interested in joining RAAF as pilot.
- Had interviews, tests, etc.
- No drink, smoke.
- Got on well with all.
- Never spoken of UFOs.
- No mention of drugs.

Ross Carrington

- Did Commercial Pilot Course with him about April.
- He seemed quite happy about his future.
- Full of enthusiasm, never depressed.
- Attempting to join RAAF aircrew. Still doing his Commercial Licence so he would have one or the other.
- He is quiet on first contact but was quite natural after that.
- Got on well with people.
- Only had Com. MET to do.
- Didn't drink or smoke.
- No mention of drugs or UFOs.

Bob Hope (Instructor)

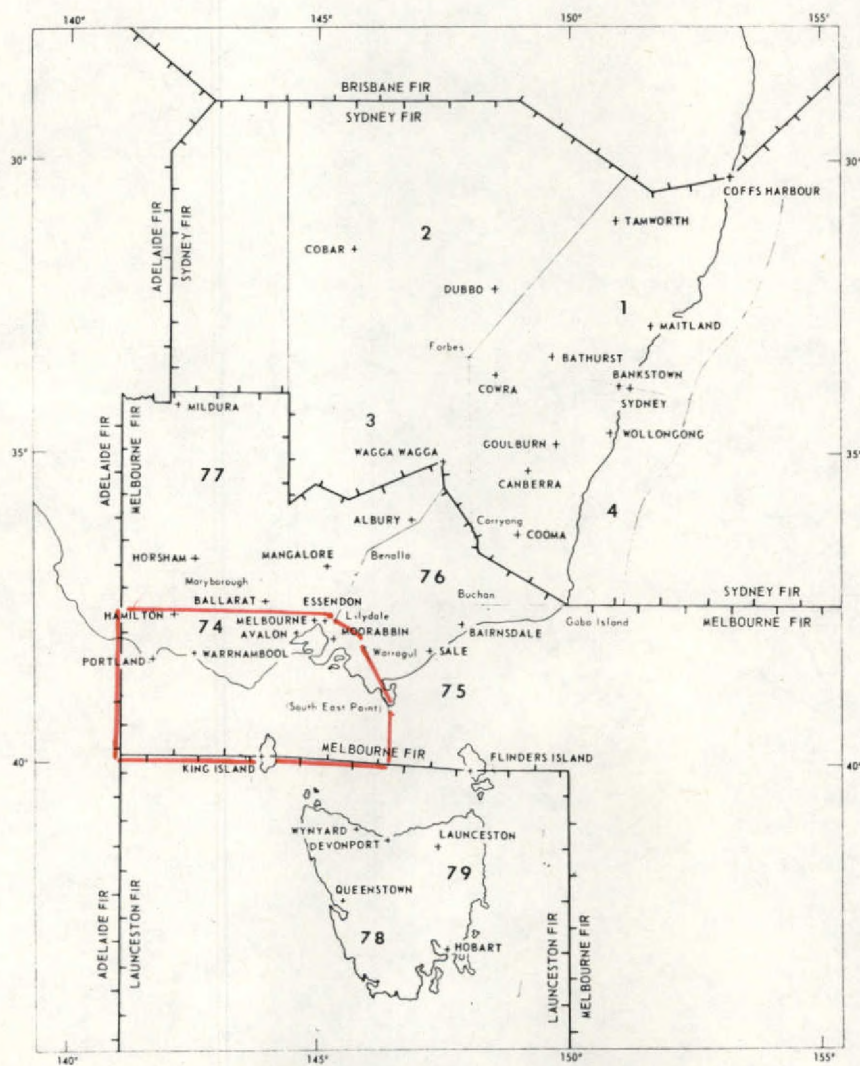
- Flew with Valentich on Tuesday afternoon to check him on type VH-DSJ C182.
- Average pilot.
- Relative quiet chap.
- VH-DSJ has a hand-held microphone.
- Wasn't carrying a headset.
- Wanted to join RAAF aircrew.
- As far as he knows he doesn't drink, smoke or take drugs.
- Saw him just prior to departure and he seemed perfectly sober and in good

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SUBJECT				
<p>frame of mind.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Took four life jackets. He was picking up friends at King Island.- He had originally intended going on Tuesday, 17.10.78, but cancelled due WX.				
<p>P. GRAHAM INVESTIGATOR</p>				

WEATHER SERVICES

89

AREA FORECASTS
SOUTHEASTERN AUSTRALIA



+ AERODROME FORECASTS ARE ISSUED ROUTINELY FOR THESE LOCATIONS

SJ MB/KI ①	C182 P	MB 0745	CTY 41 0900	KI 28 0928	Q V8	210930 211000 A0912 HVB 00913
	0819	5	00	5		

DSJ KI/MB ②	C182 P	KI 5	CTY 34	MB 44	TBA Avd LX

ZCZC MFB536 210734

GG AMMLYS

GG AMZZMB

210734 AMMLYP

TAFBUL 210730 PART TWO.

AMKI 0820 30015 9999 4SC030 13 11 11 10 1022 1021 1020 1019

AMAY 0820 35005 CAVOK 20 17 14 11 1023 1023 1022 1022

AMMN 0820 35005 CAVOK 20 15 11 09 1023 1023 1022 1022

SALE 0820 15010 CAVOK GRADU 1014 35007 17 14 11 08

1023 1023 1022 1022

BNS 0820 15010 CAVOK GRADU 1014 35007 17 14 11 08

1023 1023 1022 1022

ARFOR 0500 TO 1700 AREA 74

WIND 2000 34015 5000 34015 7000 34018 10000 34020 PS2 14000 33020

MS7 18500 33020 MS16

CLD SCT SC 2000/4000FT S MAR

VIS 40KM

FZL 10000FT

TURB MOD BLW 7000FT TIL 08Z

MFB 404

NNNNZCZC MFB453 210420

JJ AMMLYS AMMLYF AMMLYJ AMLTYS

AMKIYS

RQ CLOSE 0435 REOPEN 220030 RECALL 004621451

NAVAIDS OK. LIGHTS OFF.

TRAFFIC RCT AMKI FOR AMMB ETD 0700

GOODAY MEN,

- 783/1047 90
u.

DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE AND THE ENVIRONMENT



BUREAU OF METEOROLOGY

Regional Office Vic. Cnr Spring & La Trobe Sts Melbourne

Telephone: 662 2555 Area Code: 03 Telegrams: WHR Melbourne Telex: AA30544

52

POSTAL ADDRESS: REGIONAL DIRECTOR, BUREAU OF METEOROLOGY, P.O. BOX 1636M, MELB. VIC. 3001

IN REPLY PLEASE QUOTE 70/33

FOLIO

RCD 30 OCT 1979

29 October 1979

FILE V106

793/1047

Director,
Vic/Tas Region,
Department of Transport,
GPO Box 1733P,
MELBOURNE 3001

MISSING AIRCRAFT - VHDSJ - BASS STRAIT 21.10.78

On the evening of 21/10/78 a broad ridge of weak gradient extended westward from eastern Bass Strait through southwest Victoria to Adelaide. Conditions were perfect for night flying over Victoria with no more than 2/8 SC 5000/7000 ft and scattered cirrus about 30,000 ft. Visibility was excellent at about 30 km and more. Temperatures at 0800Z ranged from 25/27C north of the ranges to 21 south of ranges to 17C at Cape Otway and Wilson's Promontory and 15C/13C at King and Flinders Is. The lower seaboard temperatures indicate a shallow surface inversion below 1000 ft. This probably accounted for some haziness about Cape Otway. Surface winds were very light being less than 10 knots throughout Victoria with slight sea breezes about the coastal fringe. State of sea reported from Cape Otway and Wilson's Prom. was smooth seas with low swell from the southwest. The oil platform at Kingfish A. reported a calm to rippled sea with a 3 ft south-westerly swell. QWH readings ranged from 1022 mb at King S., 1023 mbs at Flinders Is. and Melbourne, 1024 mb at Gabo Is. and Wagga to 1021 mb at Mildura and 1022 at Mt Gambier.

The probable winds along the intended route were:

AMMB/CTY	1000 ft	VRB 05
	2000 ft	020/10
	5000 ft	350/10
	7000 ft	310/15
	10000 ft	270/20
CTY/AMK1	1000	340/10.
	2000	330/15
	5000	320/15
	7000	310/20
	10000	290/25

The winds elsewhere were:

North of Adelaide/Wagga/Nowra up to Lat 30S:

2000	030/15
5000	050/15 to 10 NSW coast
1000	050/20 to 10 NSW coast

Western Victoria and SE South Australia:

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2000	VRB 10
5000	010/15
7000	330/15
10000	300/20

Eastern Victoria:

2000	030/10
5000	340/10
7000	300/15
10000	270/15

Gippsland coast and east Bass Strait:

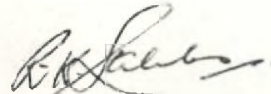
1000/2000 VRB05 becoming 320/15 toward Flinders Island.

5000	290/15
7000	280/20
1000	270/25

South of Lat.40S - freshening westerlies:

2000	270/20 to 30 over Tasmania
5000	270/25 to 30 over Tasmania
10000	270/30 to 40 over Hobart

The cloud conditions apart from Tasmanian west coast was relatively free from low cloud. Some cirrus persisted in most areas and thickened over northwest and mid-north of NSW where scattered to broken AcAs developed with base about 12,000 ft.



(R.K. STIBBS)

for Regional Director, Vic



BUREAU OF METEOROLOGY

Regional Office Vic. Cnr Spring & La Trobe Sts Melbourne

Telephone: 662 2555 Area Code: 03 Telegrams: WHR Melbourne Telex: AA30544

POSTAL ADDRESS: REGIONAL DIRECTOR, BUREAU OF METEOROLOGY, P.O. BOX 1636M, MELB. VIC. 3001

IN REPLY PLEASE QUOTE

5/11/79

Director,
Vic/Tas Regions
Dept of Transport.
GPO Box 1733 P.
MELBURN VIC. 3001.

Missing Aircraft - Bass Strait. 21-10-78
Gow V116/783/1047 - Over 70/33 29/10/79.

I enclose a copy of slightly more detailed
report on weather conditions about 0900 GMT 21/10/78.
I omitted to include it with my letter of 28/10/79

Yours faithfully

R.K. Lattin
for R.D. Vic.



BUREAU OF METEOROLOGY

Regional Office Vic. Cnr Spring & La Trobe Sts Melbourne

Telephone: 662 2555 Area Code: 03 Telegrams: WHR Melbourne Telex: AA30544

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POSTAL ADDRESS: REGIONAL DIRECTOR, BUREAU OF METEOROLOGY, P.O. BOX 1636M, MELB. VIC. 3001

IN REPLY PLEASE QUOTE

METEOROLOGICAL CONDITIONS. MOORABBIN - CAPE OTWAY - KING ISLAND
0830/0930 GMT 21/10/1978

1. At 0800 GMT 21/10/78 a broad ridge of weak gradient extended westward from eastern Bass Strait through southwest Victoria toward Adelaide.

- . The pressure range was, Melbourne 1023.5 mb, Cape Otway 1023.2 mb and King Is. 1022.6 mb

- . Surface isotherms;

21°C Melbourne - Warrnambool

17°C Wilsons Prom - Point Lonsdale - Cape Otway

13°C Lat 40° S Long 146½°E - Lat 39½° S Long 144½°E -
Lat 40½° S Long 144°E - Lat 39½° S Long 143½°E

2. Conditions were perfect for night flying. Although a trace of stratocumulus at 5000/7000 ft and scattered cirrus at 30000ft were reported, no cloud was detectable between the Victorian Ranges and the northern Tasmania coast on the infra-red satellite pictures at 0600 and 0900 GMT. There was no turbulence and visibility was excellent. An airborne aircraft over King Is. at 1000 GMT could clearly see the light from Cape Otway Lighthouse.

3. At 0800 GMT all reported surface winds were less than 10 knots. Cape Otway reported calm. Since light sea-breezes occurred along the coast during the afternoon, it is likely that shallow inversions of about 2C below 500 ft still existed in some areas at 0900 GMT. With the onset of nocturnal cooling it is likely that shallow surface inversions of up to 3C developed below 200 ft over the land and coastal fringe by 0900 GMT. It is considered that there were surface inversions over the sea but rather very stable, possibly isothermal layers below 1000 ft.

4. Laverton radiosonde at 1100 GMT indicated a subsidence inversion of 3°C between 7000 ft and 8000 ft. This inversion probably extended south to Cape Otway but further south toward King Island, the inversion would be less defined and possibly just an isothermal layer.

5. Winds and temperatures along the route were probably:
Moorabbin/Cape Otway. The Dew Points are estimates only. 56

1000 ft	Variable 5 knots	Temp + 16	Dew Point + 11
2000 "	020/10	" + 14	" + 6
5000 "	350/10	" + 7	" Zero
7000 "	310/15	" + 1	" - 3
10000 "	270/20	" zero	" dry

Cape Otway/King Island

1000	340/10	Temp + 13	Dew Point + 10
2000	330/15	" + 11	" + 7
5000	320/15	" + 7	" + 2
7000	310/20	" + 4	" Zero
10000	290/25	" zero	" dry

6. Meteorological balloon flights were carried out at Mt Gambier and Laverton at 3 pm. Both balloons had burst by 0630 GMT. The next balloon flights were not carried out until 1100 GMT.

R.K. Stibbs

(R.K. STIBBS)
for Regional Director, Vic



DEPARTMENT OF DEFENCE

MATERIALS RESEARCH LABORATORIES
CORDITE AVENUE, MARIBYRNONG, VICTORIA
P.O. BOX 50, ASCOT VALE, VIC. 3032
TELEGRAMS: MARELABS MELBOURNE

30 NOV 1978

V116-783-1047
FILE
AC14

57

Date:

29 NOV 1978

Telephone 31 7222, Ext.

Our Reference:

Director,
Department of Transport,
Transport House,
108 Lonsdale Street,
MELBOURNE, VIC. 3000

(Attention: Mr. I.S. Smith)

Your Reference: V116/783/1047

Water Samples ex Bass Strait

The samples were solvent extracted to remove any hydrocarbon-based material. The extracts were then examined by both Gas Chromatography and a combination of this with Mass Spectrometry.

Both samples yielded very small quantities of hydrocarbon oil, however the analyses indicated that these were more consistent with bunkering fuel oil than with either gasoline or lubricating oil. The peaks observed fell into a range somewhat between these two materials and hence could not be attributed to either.

The difficulty of sampling an oil slick of this nature which heralds its presence with little more than a coloured pattern on the surface is well known. It is an area of activity where undoubtedly some development work would be of value. The only advice that I can offer is a personal belief that a large thin flat sponge floated on the surface of the slick would be better than any scoop arrangement. The sponge or sponges could then be placed immediately into plastic bags for carriage and storage. In this context the sponge could well be a sheet of synthetic material such as is sold by the Clark Rubber Company.

(R.A. CUMMINS)
for Chief Superintendent



MINUTE

VICTORIA/TASMANIA REGION

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V116.783.1047

ASSU

Theoretically microwave radiation travels in straight lines, but in practice, due to the effects of the atmosphere, refraction occurs causing the rays to be bent downwards so that they follow more closely the surface of the earth. The degree of refraction depends on the density of the atmosphere at various levels. The vital level is reached when the curve of the ray equals the curvature of the earth so forming what is known as a "radio duct". Below this level, the ray is bent towards the earth, strikes the earth and then is trapped within the duct causing certain radars to see beyond the geometrical horizon. This is known as anomalous propagation or super-refraction. This occurs when the upper air is unusually warm and dry compared to the earth's surface so favouring the formation of radio ducts. This condition is likely to exist in fine, clear, settled weather conditions.

Another phenomenon associated with anomalous propagation is "second time round returns" which are radar returns received on the second rotation of the aerial head from the first transmission and are of distant objects normally out of radar range.

The notes of the radar controller show typical returns associated with the above phenomena. His remarks in regard to sea returns cannot be substantiated, little is known of effect of sea returns on equipment used by airways operations. It is possible that the return noted as a weather return could be a "second time round return" from a geographical feature of Tasmania.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Harwood".

M.J. HARWOOD
OATS
17.9.1981

SPECIALIST REPORT		File	Page
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Title	List of appended documents		
Missing Cessna 182L VH-DEJ Bass Strait 21 October 1978 Human Factors Aspects			
Author AMHF			
Designation Dr. B.J. Mahony			
<p>Frederick VALENTICH (pilot) satisfied the medical requirements for initial issue of SPL on 8.2.77 when his weight was recorded as 120 lbs. He claimed no aeronautical experience at that date. There was no medical history of significance and no licence limitations were imposed.</p> <p>2 On 21.10.78 Valentich was engaged in a night VMC flight from Moorabbin to King Island when he reported that a large craft with numerous lights was hovering above him. Transmissions ceased shortly afterwards and subsequent calls from Melbourne FSU were not answered. Despite an extensive search neither aircraft or wreckage has been found.</p> <p>3 In addition to having access to the air safety investigator's findings, the writer also interviewed the father and girl friend of Valentich and studied a copy of the tape of the final transmissions from VH-DSJ in an attempt to build up a human factors background to this occurrence.</p> <p>4 Frederick was born in Australia of Italian parents from Trieste. Father speaks "fractured" but understandable English but mother and two younger children speak no English. The language of choice in the home is Italian but Frederick was not fluent and father always corrected Frederick's spoken Italian which Frederick resented. Frederick was a below average scholar and obtained a poor result in his Leaving Certificate.</p> <p>5 Catholicism is the religion of the family but they are not regular churchgoers. Father expressed his disappointment that Frederick only attended church at Christmas, Easter and on "special occasions" and he tried to persuade Frederick to attend more often. Frederick's girl friend is a Methodist.</p> <p>6 Frederick was a very keen member of the Air Training Corps. He devoted a great deal of time to these activities which he enjoyed and he was proud to wear the uniform. He had ambitions to become an Air Force pilot but his educational qualifications precluded this.</p> <p>7 He was at pains to be accepted and respected by his superiors (in the ATC) and by his peers. Although always appearing to be above reproach, he had lied to his father, to his ATC officers and to his girl friend about having passed subjects for his CPL when he had, in fact, failed. He had also told the owner of the aircraft that, on this last flight, he had arranged to collect a consignment of crayfish from King Island and to bring back passengers who were waiting for him; neither of which was true.</p> <p>8 Father was convinced, and remains so according to subsequent media publicity, that his son was "captured" by a U.F.O and that he would be returned when "they" had finished investigating him. Frederick showed a great interest in UFOs and had a collection of books, articles and clippings on the subject but father did not think that his son was as convinced of their existence as he himself was.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">.../2.</p>			

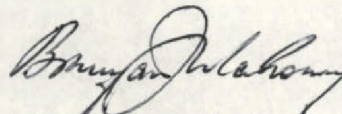
CONTINUATION SHEET	Section No.	Title	File	Page 60
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SUBJECT

9 Frederick's girl friend seemed to enjoy the publicity limelight surrounding the disappearance. She did not appear to be unduly concerned and gave the impression that she expected to see him again. She claimed that there was a permanency to her relationship with Frederick and that they had plans for becoming engaged, but father dismissed the relationships as being of no consequence.

10 In the absence of any further concrete evidence, one can only suggest a number of hypothesis to explain this disappearance :

- (a) UFO intervention - no further comment apart from the observation that there were no sighting reports of a brightly illuminated craft large enough to take on board a Cessna 182.
- (b) Disorientation - at the place and time of the occurrence, this is a distinct possibility and even probability. On the other hand, it would have resulted in uncontrolled impact with the sea and one would have expected wreckage to result.
- (c) Controlled landing on the sea with the intention of escaping from the aircraft before it sank. This could have been successful or not successful. In either case no wreckage would be found and, in the latter event, the body could still be in the aircraft.
- (d) Successful landing elsewhere. Perhaps Valentich was not where he said he was and he landed in a remote location.
- (e) Crash elsewhere when attempting (d) and the wreckage has not yet been discovered.


(B.J. Mahony)
AMHF

24.8.81

INVESTIGATOR'S NOTE

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Subject

GLIDER TOW

Phone call from Inspector Fox, D24 (13.30) 23.10.78.

A Senior Constable Campbell of Forrest (052/36-6372) had a report from some children of an aircraft towing a glider in the Barwon Downs (Apollo Bay) area at about 5.30-6.00 p.m. on Saturday 21 October.

The Report was made because it was unusual for a glider to be in that part of the State.

A.G. HARRIS
INVESTIGATOR

INVESTIGATOR'S NOTE

V File
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Subject

REPORT FROM MR. J. SNOW

A John Snow rang re UFO - 23.10.78.

He was driving his car on Saturday night (21.10.78) at about 11.45 in the Barwon Heads area when his eleven year old son saw a greenish/white of some length flash quite fast across the sky to the south.

Not observed by any other member of the family in the car as it apparently had moved too fast.

A.G. HARRIS
INVESTIGATOR

Subject

REPORT FROM MR. P. FARR

At approximately 1800 hours on 22 October 1978, I received a telephone call at my home from:

Mr. P. Farr,
29 Adrian Street,
Burwood.

Telephone after 1400 hours 29-1003.

Mr. Farr stated that he was a responsible person, an officer in RAAF reserve and he did not wish to create the opinion that he was a nut.

At about 1855 hours on Saturday 21 October 1978 he was travelling from Mt. Waverley in a southerly direction along Huntingdale Road. He observed a shower of very bright metallic 'scintillations' to the south, high in the sky at an angle of about 45° from the horizontal 1.5° of arc in vertical plane and 1° of arc in the lateral plane. About 30 bright centres. Followed by a dark con trail moving from south to north. At first he thought it to be a meteor shower.

I.S. SMITH
INVESTIGATOR

NEW FOLIO NUMBERING SYSTEM —

EFFECTIVE 25/5/81

As Per Administrative Circular No. 81/69 of 22/5/81

As from this enclosure a
new folio numbering system will come
into operation.