

No: 8/91

Ref: EW/C91/5/2

Category: 1c

Aircraft Type and Registration: Hunting Percival P56 Provost T51, G-BKOS

No & Type of Engines: 1 Alvis Leonides 126/01 piston engine

Year of Manufacture: 1954

Date & Time (UTC): 19 May 1991 at 1403 hrs

Location: Wasing Farm, near Aldermaston, Berkshire

Type of Flight: Private

Persons on Board: Crew - 1 Passengers - None

Injuries: Crew - Fatal Passengers - N/A

Nature of Damage: Aircraft destroyed

Commander's Licence: Commercial Pilot's Licence

Commander's Age: 57 years

Commander's Flying Experience: 1,850 hours (of which 180 were on type)

Information Source: AAIB Field Investigation

The pilot was an experienced display pilot and held a current CAA Display Authorisation which permitted him to fly down to 200 feet agl during aerobatic manoeuvres and 50 feet agl for fly pasts. He had been displaying the accident aircraft for the previous two years both in solo displays and also as a member of a Provost formation team. The aircraft was an ex-military machine which had been acquired by the current owner some four years ago and restored to flying condition over a period of two years. It was well maintained and had been judged as the best metal aircraft at a recent airshow.

The weather on the day of the accident was cloudy with an overcast at 4000 feet and scattered cloud at 1800 to 2000 feet. The visibility was 12 km with a good horizon and the surface wind was 270°/05 kt. On the morning of the accident, the pilot flew a Piper aircraft on a non-aerobatic sortie and at 1335 hrs flew a short aerobatic sortie in the accident aircraft accompanied by a passenger. Having landed from this flight, he put on a parachute and took off solo from runway 25 to practice a low level aerobatic sequence having asked a friend to observe and comment on his performance. The friend stated that on completion of the sequence, which was flown smoothly, the pilot made three low passes over the strip. The first pass was made from west to east, the second from east to west and the third again from west to east. At the end of each pass, the pilot reversed direction by flying a shallow wingover. The final pass was made some 150 metres to the north of runway 25 at an estimated speed of 100 kts and a

height reported by witnesses to be between 30 and 100 feet. When approaching abeam the threshold of runway 25, the aircraft was seen to enter a steeply banked turn to the right and to descend into the ground some 100 metres short of the 25 threshold. The aircraft exploded on impact and the subsequent ground fire consumed most of the cockpit area. Up to the point of impact, the engine was heard to be running smoothly and there was no apparent change in power.

The aircraft had impacted the ground at a relatively low speed at a pitch angle of about 30° on a heading of 115°(M). The angle of bank at impact could not be determined but was probably in excess of 60°. The first contact with the ground was made by the right wing tip. The aircraft then cartwheeled and came to rest 23 metres beyond the initial point of contact.

The wreckage was taken to the AAIB facility at RAE Farnborough for detailed examination. This examination confirmed that the aircraft had been intact at impact and that the engine was developing significant power. It proved impossible to check fully the integrity of the flying controls because of fire damage in the cockpit area but the components in the outer wings and rear fuselage were found to be connected and capable of correct operation. A search of the burnt out cockpit area failed to find any loose article that may have restricted control movement but witness marks in the structure of the right wing tip indicated that full right aileron had been applied on initial contact with the ground.

A post mortem examination of the pilot did not reveal any pre-existing condition that could have caused or contributed to the accident.