



CANADA

## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT

AIR SERVICES  
CIVIL AVIATION BRANCH

Serial No. 3512

### ACCIDENT REPORT

Aircraft: Consolidated PBY5A, CF-FFX  
Place: 13 miles west of Victoria, B. C. (Lat. 48° 28' N; Long. 123° 32' W)  
Date: 16 July, 1967 1740 hours PST

#### SUMMARY

The aircraft was being flown for the purpose of water-bombing a forest fire, with the pilot and co-pilot on board.

During a bombing run the left wing failed after striking trees and the aircraft collided with the ground. The pilots lost their lives and the aircraft was consumed by fire.

#### INVESTIGATION

A Certificate of Airworthiness had been issued for the aircraft and there was no evidence that any fault existed in the engines, airframe or controls at the time of the accident.

The pilot held a Commercial Pilot Licence and had accumulated a total of 10,300 hours flying experience which included more than 500 hours on the accident type. During the 90 days prior to the accident he had flown 227 hours, all on type. Evidence indicates that he had been engaged in water-bombing operations since 1958.

The co-pilot had accumulated a total of 3600 hours flying experience which included 53 hours on type, all of which were flown during the 90 days preceding the accident.

The weather was reported as being scattered cloud, visibility 40 miles, temperature 74°F and the wind 140° at 13 mph. There was a smoke cloud over the forest fire area.

The accident area is at 900 feet asl in mountainous and heavily timbered terrain. The surface is rocky and trees rise to a height of 150 feet above ground. Along the established flight path of the aircraft the terrain slopes upwards at an angle of approximately 20 degrees.

After take-off from Victoria International Airport, the aircraft was flown to an inlet close to the forest fire. Water was picked up from the inlet and dropped onto burning timber. Witnesses observed the aircraft continue this pattern, from inlet to the fire area, several times. On what proved to be the final run, the aircraft was flown over the fire, the water was dropped and a turn to the right was initiated; during this turn the left wing separated from the aircraft, which then struck the side of a mountain. A number of photographs and movie sequences were provided by witnesses.

Examination of the propellers revealed that both were near the fine-pitch position at impact and all blades were damaged in a manner consistent with power being developed. The left wing and its associated wing tip float were the first items found in the wreckage trail. The main wreckage came to rest at an altitude 265 feet higher than where physical evidence indicated the aircraft struck trees.

Of several witnesses, only one reported that the aircraft collided with trees prior to final impact. However, from photographic evidence and the nature of damage to the outer section of the left wing, it is concluded that the wing failed due to impact damage rather than from over-stress.

Photographs show the aircraft approaching the target area in reduced visibility in a right descending turn of about 20 degrees nose-down; the aircraft was being flown toward steeply rising terrain.

PROBABLE CAUSE

Misjudgement of altitude.