



ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION BRANCH

# AIB Bulletin

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Category: 1.2

**Aircraft Type and Registration** : Cessna 404, 5H-NAT      **Serial No.** 0805  
**No & Type of Engines** : Two Continental GTSI0-520M  
**Year of Manufacture** : 1981  
**Date: & Time (UTC)** : 1 Sept, 1999 at approximately 0726 hours  
**Location** : On the Southern slopes of Mt. Meru, Arusha,  
Tanzania Position S03<sup>0</sup> 15.993' E 036<sup>0</sup> 42.925'  
**Type of Flight** : Commercial Charter

**Persons on Board** :      **Crew - 1**      **Passengers - 11**

**Injuries** :      **Crew - 1 killed**      **Passengers - 11 - Killed**

**Nature of Damage** : Aircraft completely destroyed

**Commander's Licence** : ATPL

**Commander's Age** : 39 years

**Commander's Experience** : 16,500 hours of which about 2000 were on  
type  
Last 90 days: 189.3 hours  
Last 28 days: 101.5 hours

**Information Source** : Telephone call from Kilimanjaro A.T.S.

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The Bulletin contains facts relating to the accident which have been determined up to the time of issue. This information is published to inform the public and the aviation industry of the general circumstances of the accidents at the preliminary/stage and must necessarily be regarded as tentative and subject to alteration or correction if additional evidence becomes available.

## ALL TIMES UTC

1. On 1<sup>st</sup> September 1999 at 0531 hours the aircraft took off from Arusha Airport on a VFR positioning flight to Seronera to pick tourists and transport them to Kilimanjaro International Airport. The ETA Seronera was 0615 hours. The outbound leg had 4 persons on board including another Pilot who was being positioned at Seronera to pick tourists in another company aircraft from there to Kilimanjaro International Airport. The endurance of the aircraft on departure was 0300 hours.
2. The outbound flight was normal and the pilot reported on the ground Seronera to the company operations base at 0617 hours.
3. 5H-NAT left Seronera at 0640 hours. It was carrying 10 tourists, one tour guide and one pilot. It was flying VFR, cruising at FL 115. On request from tourists on board, the routing was via the Ol Doinyo Lengai mountain which is a dormant volcanic mountain, elevation of 9442 feet. The ETA Kilimanjaro was 0735 hours.
4. The second aircraft a Cessna 402, 5H-TGA departed Seronera at 0644 hours on a VFR flight with 8 persons on board including the pilot. The pilot of this aircraft selected the route Seronera – Mount Ol Doinyo Lengai – AR NDB – KIA. The ETA KIA was 0737 hours. This aircraft had also selected FL 115 enroute.
5. The enroute weather was clear at Seronera with light wind. The route weather to Mt Ol Doinyo Lengai was also clear with the mountain and the rift valley visible. The weather on route Mount Ol Doinyo Lengai – Arusha – KIA was cloudy with several solid layers of clouds topped at 9500 feet. The Southern part of Mount Meru area was covered by clouds.
6. At 0719 hours 5H-NAT called Arusha Tower on 118.4 MHz and passed estimate of Abeam Arusha at 0725 hours ETA HTKJ 0735 hours FL 115.
7. At 0720hours 5HNAT called Kilimanjaro on 120.1 Mhz and advized them of its ETA 0735 hours. Standard information was passed to the aircraft i.e runway in use 09, QNH 1020.
8. The pilots of the two aircraft 5H-NAT and 5H-TGA were in communication at some stage of the flight and while 5H-TGA was on descent passing FL 100 was cautioned by 5H-NAT of Mt. Monduli which is 8600 ft high and 41 nm from KIA. 5H-TGA, passed Mt. Monduli at approximately 0724 hours at 9500 feet and the mountain was covered by clouds.

At this stage, at approximately 0724 hrs 5H-NAT advised 5H-TGA that he would maintain FL 110 for some time and reported his DME distance 33 from KV.

9. At approximately 0726 when 5H-TGA was 36 DME from KV and FL 95, the Pilot inquired DME/FL from 5H-NAT. This was given as 28 DME/FL 95. This was the last Communication with 5H-NAT.

At 0728 5H-TGA passed over 'AR' NDB.

10. After the aircraft failed to arrive at KIA, Pilot of 5H-TGA departed again at 1156 hrs to conduct an aerial search for 5H-NAT on the southern and western slopes of Mt. Meru. The search was done for half an hour and was hampered by low clouds at 6700ft.
11. After extensive search involving 6 fixed wing aircraft and two helicopters lasting 9 hrs 22 minutes, the wreckage of the aircraft was sighted at approximately 1500 hrs in a rugged mountain terrain at position S  $03^{\circ} 15.993'$  E  $036^{\circ} 42.925'$  at an elevation of 8770 feet. The aircraft was completely destroyed by impact and the wreckage was distributed over a wide area. The badly mutilated bodies of the occupants were scattered with the wreckage and all the seats had been detached from the floor.
12. The accident site was approximately 27 nm from KIA on the southern slopes of Mt. Meru at an elevation of 8770 feet. It was covered by a thick tropical forest with heavy undergrowth. The terrain is very rugged with steep slopes and Gorges.

Examination of the wreckage and the crash site showed that the right wing first collided with trees and separated. There were no signs of pre-crash failure. There was no fire but the aircraft was completely destroyed by impact forces.

The circumstances of this accident are being investigated.