

AIR/713C

CLASSIFICATION CONFIDENTIAL

TRN/AVA/1 # 6

AIR/713C

GROUP FIGAS

VOL 1

SUB-GROUP REPORTS

1 of 6

CONFIDENTIAL

SUBJECT ACCIDENT TO VPFAL

**ARCHIVE**

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DCS	8/9/10	✓
HE	1	20/8
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HE	✓	23/8
BJ	1	CS
HE	24/25	1/4
HE	1	2/7
BJ	2	1/4
R	9/4/4	8
PA		

Archives

CONFIDENTIAL

POINTS EMERGING FROM A MEETING HELD AT 11:30 A.M. ON  
12 AUGUST 1976 TO DISCUSS ANY EMERGENCY ACTION REQUIRED  
AS A RESULT OF THE ACCIDENT TO ALPHA-LIMA:-

1. PWD has been instructed to have a landrover, preferably No. 51, ready at PWD for any extended journey in East Falkland. Mr M Clarke has been asked to stand by as driver.
2. Communications: the accident to Alpha Lima does not on itself alter the communications situation, but the Postmaster and Cable & Wireless should be asked to ensure that all possible action is taken to ensure that staff and facilities are available until Monday 16 Aug at least.
3. Sea communications: It should be borne in mind that the 'Penelope' and the 'Alert' could be used to transport doctors and/or patients in any emergency; probably the 'Penelope' could best be used by being stationed at Darwin, from where she could reach Port Howard in West Falkland reasonably easily.
4. Mr W R Luxton at Chartres may be available to bring patients into Stanley provided they can be got to either Hill Cove, Fox Bay or Chartres. The question of insurance cover in this situation should be investigated.
5. The SMO should make contingency plans to put a doctor on West Falkland. A final decision on this matter should be taken when it became clear by a.m. on the 13th whether Alpha Kilo would or would not be flying shortly.
6. Consideration should be given to buying a new or rebuilt engine for Alpha Lima. The one now submerged would almost certainly have to be sent away for a complete overhaul. The normal cost for an overhaul is between £9,000 and £10,000 including freight, whereas Captain Kerr believes a rebuilt engine could be bought for approximately £7,000 FOB.

6. (Cont'd)

Possible sources for rebuilt engines are: DH Canada, Ministry of defence, and FIELS in UK.

7. (H.E. the Governor and SCA only): It was agreed that the reporting procedures under the CANO should be followed immediately. Capt Kerr agreed that this aspect could be dealt with by Mr Kanagasabai leaving Capt Kerr free to concentrate on the salvage operation. Meantime the CS and SCA believed it proper that Mr Lavigne should be "grounded".

A J P Monk  
12 Aug 76.

m.

12th August

76.

The Superintendent of  
Civil Aviation,  
Stanley.

ACCIDENT TO BEAVER AIRCRAFT VFFAL on 11 AUGUST 76  
at 15:00 hrs

I have been asked by the Chief Secretary to request the following information from you.

In order to enable me to conduct a formal investigation into the cause of the above accident please be good enough to arrange for the following very early:-

- (1) A report from the pilot involved in the accident, Captain J. Lavigne, in terms of Article 79 and Reg. 14 in Schedule 15 of the Air Navigation (Overseas Territories) Order 1976.
- (2) For a copy in plain language of the local meteorological report at the time of the accident at the site of the accident.
- (3) The names and addresses of persons who were witnesses at the site of this accident.
- (4) The submission of the Pilot's License and endorsements.
- (5) The flying log book of the pilot and the log book of the aircraft and engine.
- (6) A report from the operator of New Island of the conversational record he had with the pilot.

*Sgd. S. Kanagasabai*  
S. Kanagasabai  
Airport Superintendent.

*cc.* C.S. ✓  
O.i.C. Meteorological Station  
(for information and the necessary met report required).

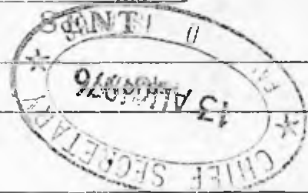
m.

GOVERNMENT TELEGRAPH SERVICE

8

FALKLAND ISLANDS

WAP 15148-B21 585968/704663 500 pds 9/69 Grp.782



Number	Office of Origin	Handed in at	Date
			13.8.76

To

MR. W. LUXTON CHARTRES VIA FOX BAY BY CABLE & WIRELESS

No. 113

FOR CONTINGENCY PLANNING  
 IN CONNECTION WITH THE POSSIBILITY OF THE NEED TO REQUEST USE  
 YOUR AIRCRAFT IN AN EMERGENCY PLEASE ADVISE WHAT INSURANCE COVER  
 YOU HAVE GRATEFUL EARLY REPLY

CHIEFSEC

Time

file

GOVERNMENT TELEGRAPH SERVICE

FALKLAND ISLANDS

SENT



Number	Office of Origin	Words	Handed in



To  
CAPTAIN LAVIGNE  
NEW ISLAND

NO 145

PLEASE SUBMIT A WRITTEN REPORT AND SEND IT THROUGH MR  
JIM KERR & IF POSSIBLE REGARDING ACCIDENT TO AIRCRAFT

CHIEFSEC

Time

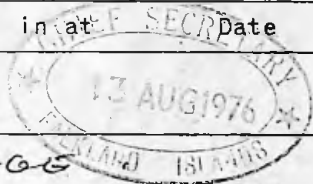
file AIR/7/3

GOVERNMENT TELEGRAPH SERVICE

10

FALKLAND ISLANDS

SENT

Number	Office of Origin	Words	Handed in at	Date
To	MR & MRS DEREK EVANS NEW ISLAND	- SAME MESSAGE TO MR PLUMRIDGE		

NO 144

FOR THE RECORD ONLY PLEASE WRITE DOWN WHAT YOU OBSERVED AT THE TIME OF THE ACCIDENT TO BEAVER, INCLUDING DETAILS LIKE POSITION OF AIRCRAFT, WEATHER CONDITIONS, ETC THAT COULD BE OF VALUE. PLEASE TRY SEND STATEMENT WITH JIM KERR.

CHIEFS6C

Time

Mr Monk

Message from Jim Kerr:

Aircraft is beached. Ian Bridges got out to  
Rincon at 4 o'clock.

Friday 6 Aug 76.  
(4:50 pm)

*M.*  
—

*P.A. on file. m*  
*596*



file

AIR/13/1

GOVERNMENT TELEGRAPH SERVICE

FALKLAND ISLANDS

SENT

WAP 15142-821 585968/704663 500 pds 9/69 Grp.782

Number	Office of Origin	Words	Handed in at	Date
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12.8.76

To

CAPT JACK SOLLIS



No. 141

ON ARRIVAL AT NEW ISLAND ENDEAVOUR TO RIGHT AIRCRAFT AND BEACH HER SAFELY. IT IS IMPORTANT THAT THIS OPERATION IS CARRIED OUT SO AS TO CAUSE LEAST STRAIN ON AIRFRAME IN ACCORDANCE WITH DETAILED ADVICE TO BE PASSED TO YOU BY CAPT JIM KERR.

CHIEFSEC.

Time

To: Chief Secretary.

19th August 1976

Dear Mr Monk,

Investigation into the accident of the  
Beaver aircraft VP-FAL on 11-8-76, 1500 hrs.

Reference your verbal request of me to investigate into the accident of the Beaver aircraft VP-FAL that occurred on 11 August 1976 at about 1500 hrs at New Island, I have to report as follows:-

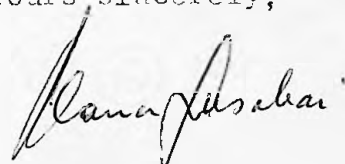
1. In accordance with the accepted practice of such an investigation, the following procedure was adopted:-
  - a) A written statement was obtained from the pilot of the aircraft, Mr John Lavigne. (Annex. 1)
  - b) Written statements were also obtained from the witnesses who were at the site of the accident, Mr and Mrs Derek Evans, and Mr Keith Plumridge (Annex. 2, 3 and 4).
  - c) A written statement was also obtained from Mr D S Bramley, Chief Engineer, R.A.F., who inspected the Beaver aircraft and certified it fit for flying on 11 August prior to the accident. (Annex. 5)
  - d) Documents and records such as Journey Log Book, Maintenance Certificate, Engine Log Book, Propeller Log Book, Defects Record Book, were called for from the Chief Engineer Mr Bramley, and inspected and checked and were found quite in order.
  - e) Documents like the Pilot License, type endorsements and Flying Log Book were called for from the pilot, Mr John Lavigne, and inspected and found in order; however he did not have a Flying Log Book so it was not possible to assess his flying hours of experience.
  - f) Mr Lavigne's Commercial Pilot's Licence is No. 2208323 issued by F.A.A. at U.S.A. on 15-7-73. It was endorsed for Single Engine Land and Sea and Multi-engine Land with Instrument Rating. His last medical examination was done on 15-12-75.
  - g) The actual weather conditions at New Island at about 1500 hrs, the time of the accident, and the local forecast for the area from 1400 hrs were called for from the Meteorological Forecaster and studied.
  - h) I was not in a position to visit the site of the accident and examine the wreckage or plane though this is also one of the requirements in the process of investigation.
  - i) A copy of the Meteorological report of 11-8-76 is also attached for your information and perusal (Annex.6).

4. Conclusions.

- a) A study of the weather forecast for the period during which the accident took place reveals that the wind was very gusty from the SW, 30 to 35 knots.
- b) The pilot was aware of these conditions and therefore would have been expected to take precautionary measures when landing and taxi-ing.
- c) The statements of the witnesses give room to believe that there were gusty winds when the plane was taxi-ing. They also give room to believe that the amount of power or throttle that the Pilot applied while turning right on taxi-ing with a cross wind affecting him from the right may have been too much - which adding to the gust of wind may have made the plane turn over.
- d) Though it is actually difficult to establish the real cause of the accident, there are reasons to believe that it may have been caused due to the combination of the following factors:-
  1. lack of experience of the pilot to fly in such weather conditions.
  2. lack of knowledge of local weather conditions and adaptations.
  3. very gusty wind conditions.
  4. incorrect applying of power while turning in taxi-ing under very gusty wind conditions.

However I would recommend a board of personnel with flying experience to study the facts available to reach a final verdict or decision.

Yours sincerely,



S. Kanagasabai  
Airport Superintendent.

Enc.

m.

Friday, 13 Aug - 1976

Attn: Chief Secretary:

Concerning Aircraft accident to VP-FAL on  
11 Aug. '76.

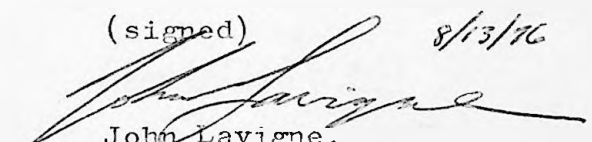
Wind: SW 35K gusting.

After having made a normal landing at New Island at approx. 1500 HRS. I initiated a gradual turn to the right, towards the buoy. After approx. 30 degrees of turn an abrupt gust of wind caught the left wing. I immediately tried to correct for this but had insufficient control response. The right wing tip touched the water surface causing the right float to dig in, and flip the aircraft over on its back.

I managed to exit the aircraft within a couple of minutes, but was unable to prevent the aircraft from being blown over to the far bank of the harbour where it came to rest in the kelp.

(signed)

8/13/76

  
John Lavigne.

Continuing the statement given Mr John Lavigne,  
the following questions were asked by Mr Kanagasabai:-

Q: Have you flown a Beaver aircraft before you came to Falkland Islands?

A: No.

Q: How many hours have you had on Beaver aircraft up to 11th August 76?

A: Approx. 200 hours.

Q: Have you made any landing at New Island before?

A: Yes.

Q: How many times?

A: About 15 to 20 times.

Q: You have never encountered such weather as you did on 11-8-76?

A: Yes, I had several times.

Q: Then what was the difficulty you had on 11th August to cause this accident?

A: While turning out of wind a gust of wind (est. 35 to 40 K) caught the left wing causing the right wing tip to strike the surface of the water, which dug the floats in and flipped over the aircraft.

Q: Were you aware that there was a gusty wind of about 35-40 knots while landing?

A: Yes.

Q: Was the sea choppy?

A: Yes.

Q: It is observed that you turned right after landing with a cross wind affecting you - from your right is it correct?

A: Yes.

Q: Do you think that you may have accelerated more than required to turn the plane while you were taxi-ing?

A: No.

Q: Did you at any time during taxi-ing give more power than required?

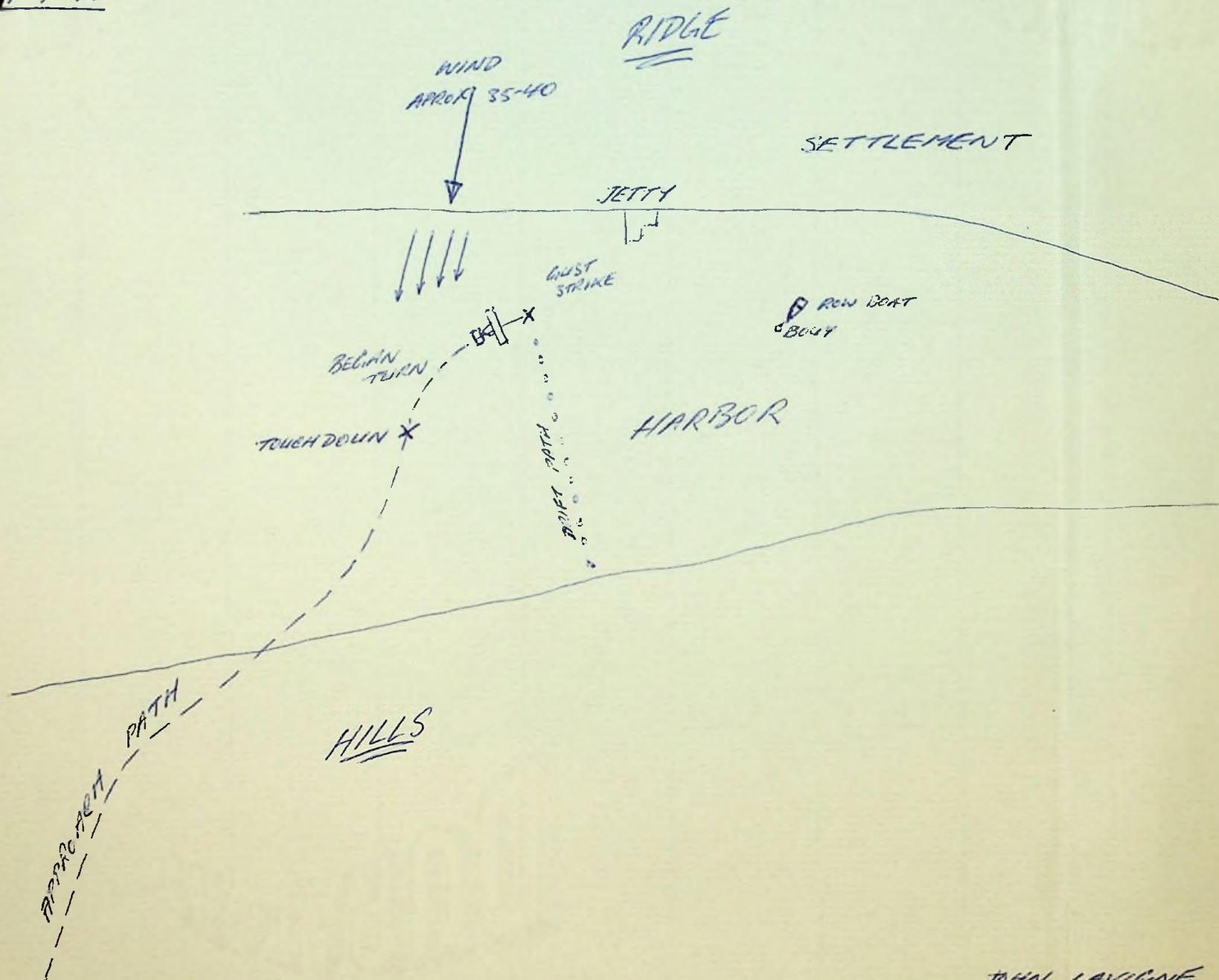
A: No.

----- (end)

*John Lavigne*  
8/19/76

NEW ISLAND  
AUG 1 1976

ANNEX 1. (ctr)



JOHN LAVICINE

New Island,  
14th August 1976.

Report on accident to Alpha Lima on 11th August.

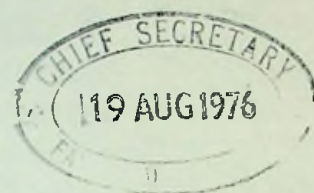
Place: Off the jetty, New Island.

Time : Approx. 2.50 p.m.

Weather: Outside, blowing 30 to 35 kts. S.W.

Inside ,blowing 20 to 25kts. with gusts up to 30 kts. S.W.

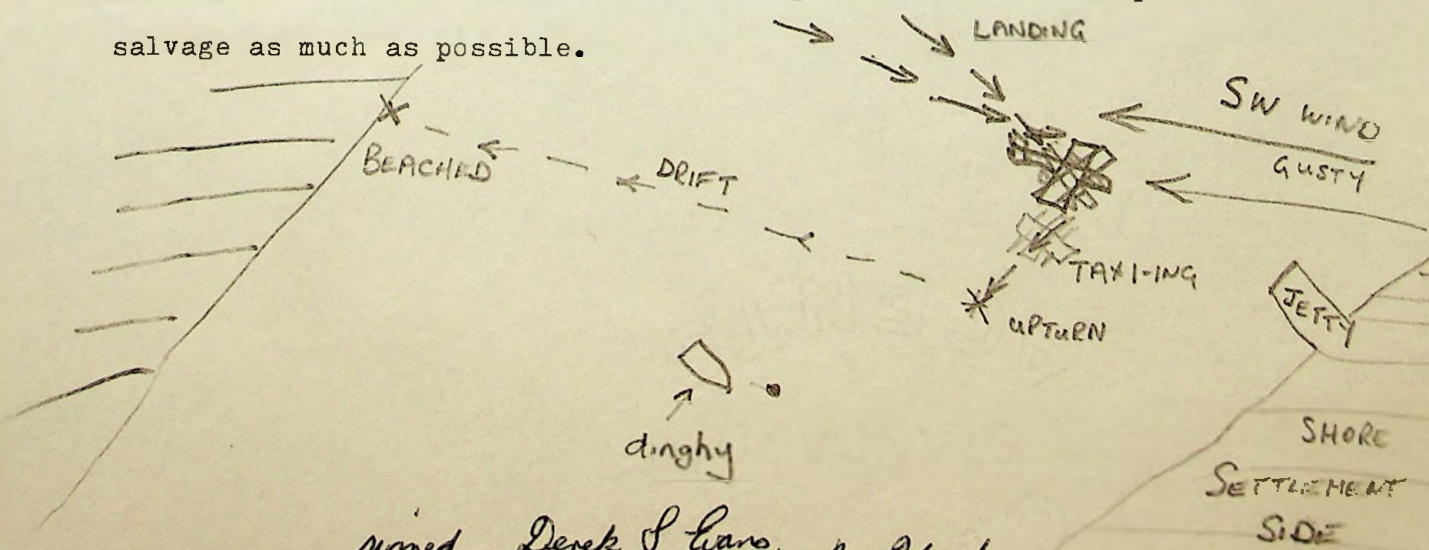
Sunny with good visibility.



My wife, child, Keith Plumridge (Camp Teacher) and myself were sitting in the dinghy at the bouy because the tide was too low to use the jetty. There was quite a lot of white water in the harbour.

Alpha Lima came in over the point opposite the settlement into wind and side-slipped down to a good landing. She was then on the seaward side of the dinghy and closer in to the jetty. The pilot turned across wind and began to taxi towards us. He revved up the engine and the nose lifted. The plane suddenly started to tip and the port float came out of the water. The pilot throttled down and appeared to be attempting to turn back into wind. The plane looked as though it might settle but another gust must have caught it because it heeled further over. The starboard wing went under and the plane turned on it's back at an attitude of approximately 45 degrees. The plane was still to seaward of us about 70 yards away ~~to~~ seawards ~~of us~~. After a few moments the pilot clambered out onto the struts between the floats. The plane drifted very quickly towards the lee shore. We got the pilot off and the plane grounded a few minutes later.

We rowed back to the settlement side so that Margaret could radio for assistance. Two more trips were made to the plane to salvage as much as possible.



signed Derek I. Evans. New Island.

Derek, Keith Plumridge, myself and Richard were in the dinghy at the buoy in the harbour at about ten to three in the afternoon.

The wind was blowing from the South West. From the small tussac island at the end of the settlement and right up into the settlement the wind was blowing about twenty five knots. Outside the small tussac island the wind was quite a lot stronger, about thirty to thirty five knots. There were also a lot of gusts blowing down into the harbour.

The plane came in to land over the shoulder of Fergie's Hill. It looked to be a good landing. The plane landed across the harbour and was fairly close to the jetty by the time she had finished landing. The front of the plane was then facing the jetty. The pilot then revved the engine up and began to turn the plane towards us and to taxi in our direction, as the plane turned in our direction to face us there seemed to be a gust of wind which caught and lifted the wing on the settlement side so that the wing on the other side came down into the water, during all this time the float on the settlement side was out of the water. Then for a minute the plane looked as if she was going right herself. Then the wing went a bit further under the water and the tail lifted into the air as the nose came down into the water. By the time we had untied the dinghy from the buoy the plane had started to drift across the harbour and the pilot had got himself out of the plane. The plane was drifting so fast across the harbour it was difficult to reach her. We managed to catch up with the plane when she was ran into the kelp on the other side of the harbour. Then the pilot got into the dinghy and we got out of the way in case she rolled over. We then rowed to the settlement to get rid of the luggage and to get on the R/T for help. Then Derek and Keith went back to the plane to salvage what they could before dark.

(Signed)

Margaret Evans

New Island.



STATEMENT OF KEITH JOHN PLUMRIDGE, AGE 19 YEARS 8 MONTHS,  
WRITTEN ON SUNDAY AUGUST 15th 1976 AT STANLEY.

On Wednesday August 11th 1976 I was due to fly from New Island to Dunnose Head. Mrs Margaret Evans and her son Riki were due to fly to Stanley on the same day. The plane was due to arrive at 2.50 p.m. approximately. The tide was low making it necessary to take the dinghy out to the buoy. The weather at that time was gusty, the wind blowing 30-35 knots and coming from the South West, i.e. blowing into the harbour. The plane arrived at 2.50 p.m. approximately and landed into the wind facing away from us. The pilot turned the plane towards us and accelerated to taxi towards us. He was now taxi-ing across wind. When the plane was approximately 75 yards away there was a gust of wind. The plane tilted towards us, the left float leaving the water and the right wing tip touching the water. The pilot cut down the engine and tried to turn back into the wind. The wingtip only momentarily touched the water and the plane had begun righting herself when another gust of wind tilted her again and this time the wingtip went into the water, the tail lifted and she slowly rolled over forwards as if pivoting on the right wingtip and propeller, finally floating on her back, the engine completely immersed, the wings partially immersed. By now we had untied and began rowing towards the plane but the wind took the plane so fast it was impossible to catch it. The pilot managed to get out and stood on the float struts uninjured. There were no other passengers aboard. The plane reached the kelp on the opposite shore from the settlement and stopped moving, presumably grounded on the rocky shore. We rowed up to the plane, took the pilot aboard the dinghy and rowed back to the settlement to notify Stanley.

2.

Continuing the statement given by Mr Keith John Plumridge, Mr S. Kanagasabai asked the following questions:-

Q: Keith, there seems to be a similarity in the statement given by you and that given by Mr Derek Evans. Did you both at any time consult this incident before you gave the statements?

A: We both talked about what we saw and what had happened. Derek had written a lot down in his diary so in fact we had talked about it.

Q: Reading the statement you have given, I will repeat some of it and ask you certain questions for clarification. (Quote) He was now taxi-ing across wind. When the plane was approximately 75 yards away there was a gust of wind. The plane tilted towards us, the left float leaving the water and the right wing tip touching the water. The pilot cut down the engine and tried to turn back into the wind (Unquote) During this period, did you observe the plane under power, in other words, was the engine running or not?

A: The engine was running when the plane tilted then the pilot cut it; but whether he cut it right off when the plane tilted I cannot say.

Q: (Quote) The wingtip only momentarily touched the water and the plane had begun righting herself when another gust of wind tilted her again and this time the wingtip went into the water, the tail lifted and she slowly rolled over forwards as if pivoting on the right wingtip and propeller, finally floating on her back, the engine completely immersed, the wings partially immersed (unquote).

3.

During these instants, was the engine running and could you tell us whether the running of the engine was fast, slow or could you not hear it at all.

A: The second time it tilted the engine had been cut down - possibly when it was half over the engine had definitely stopped.

Q: When the aircraft was landing and taxi-ing do you think that he was running the engine fast, from your knowledge?

A: He was taxi-ing faster than I have seen the other pilots ta xi. But I have seen John Lavigne taxi-ing that fast before at the same place.

Q: The gusty winds that you mention - were they affecting the dinghy so that it was rocking?

A: Yes, it was very choppy.

Q: Have you got any knowledge of flying?

A: Very little.

Q: Do you think that the approach with such a gust of wind - that a controlled approach could have averted this incident?

A: If the pilot had controlled it.<sup>?</sup> To get across to us under power he would have had to do it at cross wind but he did not do it the way I have seen the other pilots do it.

Q: How long did it take before the plane disappeared into the water - from the time it started tilting until it was upside down?

A: Three seconds ?

4.

Q: How far away from the dinghy was the plane?

A: 70-80 yards.

Q: In your experience have you ever seen such weather conditions and the plane land on that island?

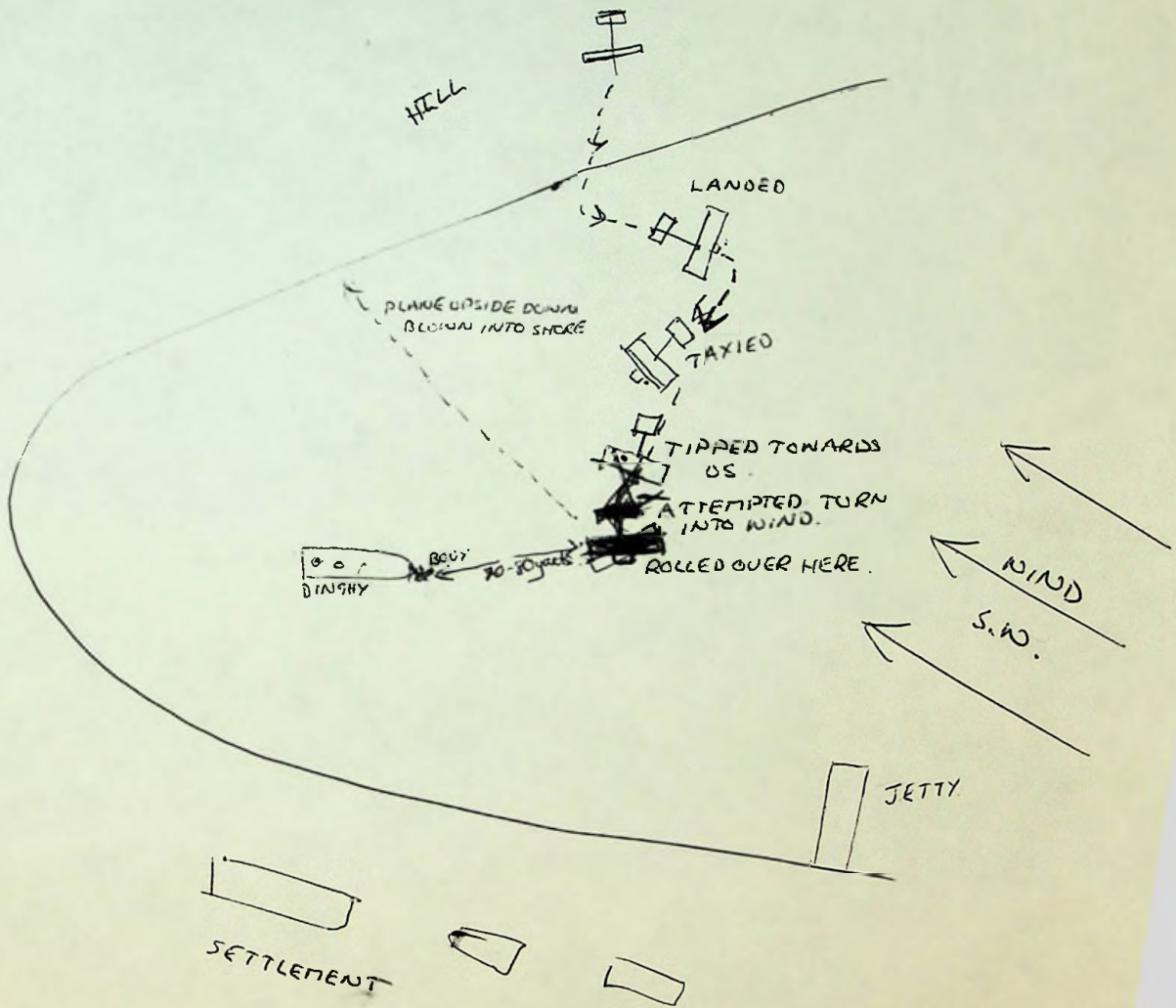
A: This is the worst condition I have seen the plane land on that island.

*W. T. Plummeridge  
16<sup>th</sup> August 1976.*

16 Aug 76

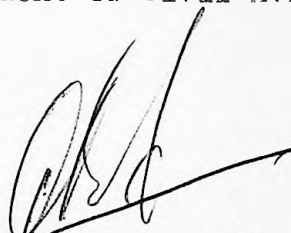
Secretariat  
Stanley.

m.



This is to certify that I, Chief Technician D. S. Bramley, Engine Fitter of the Royal Air Force, inspected Beaver A/C VP-FAL prior to the first flight on 11-8-76, and on completion of my inspection and ground runway checks found the power plant and electrical systems in an air-worthy condition. Subsequently on turn round servicing at approx. 12:15 on the 11-8-76 the aircraft was found serviceable. The A/C was then accepted and flown at approx. 13:00 by Captain J. Lavigne.

All A/C documents are maintained as required on instruction from the Superintendent of Civil Aviation.



(D. S. Bramley)

Stanley,  
16 Aug 76.

Forecast sent to the Broadcast Secretary for rebroadcast over the rediffusion network at 1000 local mean time on Wednesday 11th August 1976

Today will be mainly cloudy with rain or sleet but brighter weather with some sunny periods and occasional showers will spread across the Falklands during the afternoon and evening. The wind will be fresh Westerly backing Southwest during the afternoon.

Forecast sent to the 'Master' 'M.V. <sup>Forrest</sup> ~~FORREST~~' at 1500 local mean time  
on Wednesday 11th August 1976.

Wind. Southwest 30 to 35 knots. Occasional wintry showers.

General Weather Situation at 1400 local mean time 11th August 1976.

A cold front was situated in the general vicinity of New Island at the time and was making its way across the Falklands. Weather ahead of the front was cloudy with 5/8 Stratus at 800feet and 8/8 Altostratus 10,000ft. with sleet and snow at times. Weather behind the front was mainly cloudy with 6/8 to 7/8 Cumulus 2000feet. The wind ahead of the front was 240 degrees 20 knots and behind the front was 210 to 200 degrees 30 to 35 knots with gusts 50 knots.

Forecast for Air Service at 0915 Local Mean Time.

Westerly 20 to 25 knots backing southwest this afternoon.

Rain or sleet ahead of the front with stratus and Altostratus or Nimbostratus, showers behind the front.

New Island Observation at 1400 Local Mean Time.

Southwest 25 to 30 knots.

ANNEX 6



Copy  
WEDNESDAY  
11<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST. 1976.  
1800 Z. 1400 L.M.T.



CONFIDENTIAL

Y.S.

I attach the report prepared by Mr Kanagasabai on the accident to VP-FAL on 11 August 1976.

9  
11/1

2. Mr Kanagasabai is to be congratulated on a thorough job lucidly expressed.

11/1

3. I propose to convene a board of personnel this p.m. provided SCA is available. It would be chaired by me and have Mr Kanagasabai and Captain J Kerr as members. We would not call witnesses but make our recommendations on the basis of Mr K's report.

4. One important aspect that we would have to look at would be that referred to by Mr K at 1 (e), that Mr Lavigne says he does not have a flying log book.

11/1  
C.S.

*[Signature]*  
C.S.  
20-8-76

m. you will be fully informed of developments?  
As proposed please and  
no doubt that

*[Signature]*  
20/8

CONFIDENTIAL



Chief  
COLONIAL SECRETARY'S OFFICE,  
STANLEY,  
FALKLAND ISLANDS.

23 August 1976

His Excellency the Governor  
Government House  
Stanley.

*Your Excellency,*

ACCIDENT TO BEAVER AIRCRAFT VP-FAL, 11 AUGUST 1976.

The following report is submitted in accordance with Regulation 9 of the Civil Aviation (Investigation of Accidents) Regulations 1959. This covering report is based upon the findings arrived at by Mr Kanagasabai, who was appointed by Your Excellency in accordance with the powers conferred on Your Excellency by Regulation 7.1 of the same Regulations.

2. I, together with Mr Kanagasabai and Captain J Kerr, have looked at all the evidence assembled by the inspector and we agree with the conclusion drawn by the inspector at para 4 (d) of his report.

3. It is our unanimous opinion that because of the shortcomings shown by the inspector's report, particularly the inexperience of Mr John Lavigne in the handling of float 'planes on water and in difficult weather conditions, but also because Mr Lavigne was unable to produce his flying log book to substantiate his previous experience, it would be inadvisable to allow Mr Lavigne to continue to fly FIGAS aircraft. If for no other reason this recommendation makes itself because, should Mr Lavigne be involved in another accident, Government would have no case to support and may be involved in very heavy damages if the accident resulted in loss of life or property.

"Would" OR  
"1611" ?

4. It is our view that had a more experienced pilot been in charge of the aircraft on the occasion of the accident on 11 August 1976, the damage to the aircraft and consequent financial loss would not have been sustained. Probably a more experienced pilot would not have attempted to land in such conditions or, if he had landed, would have used quite a different method of approach to the dinghy. In fact, Captain Kerr reported to the Board of Inquiry that, prior to the flight which ended in the accident, Mr Lavigne had expressed to Capt. Kerr some doubt as to his ability to complete the journey in time, and had been advised that if there was any doubt he should miss out New Island -so that to this extent Mr Lavigne can be considered at fault.

5. Having come to this conclusion, it remains for us to decide how Mr Lavigne's Agreement should be terminated. Unless he is dismissed in accordance with paragraph 7 of his Agreement, Government may terminate his engagement by one month's notice, or allow his Agreement to lapse under paragraph 4, which provides that the term of engagement is completed on the return to the Colony from overseas leave of Captain Ian Campbell. This is expected to be on 9 September. Mr Lavigne, provided his work and conduct had been satisfactory, should have been entitled to one week's leave in accordance with paragraph 10 of his Agreement.

6. Weighing all the circumstances and the legal and personal consequences for Mr Lavigne of terminating his Agreement by dismissal, I am of the opinion that Government should proceed as follows:-

Agreed.  
ND 23/8/76

(a) Write to Mr Lavigne stating that in the view of the inspector, contributory cause of the accident was his lack of experience in the handling of float 'planes on water in difficult weather conditions;

Agreed.  
ND 23/8/76

(b) That Government does not consider Mr Lavigne's action sufficient to require termination of his contract under the dismissal clause of his Agreement, and therefore

Agreed  
ND 23/8/76

(c) will regard Mr Lavigne's Agreement as remaining in force until 9 September 1976 when it will lapse and he will then be entitled to one week's leave, which will terminate at 23:59 on Thursday 16 September 1976;

Agreed.  
23/8/76  
Agreed  
23/8/76

- (d) that during the residue of Mr Lavigne's Agreement period he will only be required to fly under express instruction of the Chief Secretary after consultation with His Excellency the Governor, on which occasions he must be accompanied by a mechanic to assist and advise him in the handling of the aircraft on water;
- (e) Government will honour its obligation to provide Mr Lavigne with a return passage to Montreal.

7. I have not referred in the above paragraph to the fact that Mr Lavigne has not produced his flying log book, as this involves complications with regard to his local licensing on which it is possible that FIG may have been at fault. To refer to this in a letter to Mr Lavigne or to invoke the dismissal clause could raise quite difficult legal considerations. In this connection I refer particularly to the requirements of Regulation 7.3 and the rather complicated procedures if we were to comply fully with Regulation 8. In the result Government could be involved in rather more expenditure than by allowing Mr Lavigne to disappear quietly.

Tel. sent  
to J.C.O.  
23/8/76

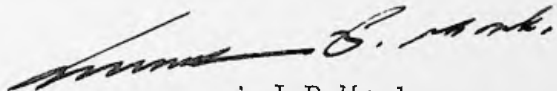
8. There are 17 days left before Captain Campbell returns to the Colony. I think we can weather this period, but it is important that Capt. Campbell does return on 9th September.

9. The above is submitted for Your Excellency's approval, in accordance with the Regulations quoted above.

10. Your Excellency's attention is drawn to the last sentence of Regulation 9, which empowers Y.E. to make the report public if Y.E. sees fit. Our recommendation is that the report should not be made public.

Agreed.  
23/8/76

*I have the honour to be  
Your Excellency's  
most loyal and faithful servant*



A J P Monk  
Chief Secretary.



GOVERNMENT HOUSE,  
FALKLAND ISLANDS.

23 August 1976

The Hon. the Chief Secretary  
Falkland Islands

ACCIDENT TO BEAVER AIRCRAFT VP-FAL

I am much obliged to you for the Report, reference AIR/7/36 of 23 August 1976, submitted to me in accordance with Regulation 9 of the Civil Aviation (Investigation of Accidents) Regulations 1959, covering a detailed report by Mr Managasabai, who was appointed by me in accordance with the powers conferred on me by Regulation 7.1 of the same Regulations.

Having carefully considered all the evidence contained in the two Reports, and the conclusions reached by you, Captain J Kerr and Mr Managasabai, I have decided that:-

- a. you should write to Mr Lavigne in the name of the Falkland Islands Government in the precise terms set out in paragraph 6 of your Report to me of 23 August, making the point in particular that Mr Lavigne's agreement will remain in force until 9 September 1976, when it will lapse and he will then be entitled to one week's leave which will terminate at 2359 hours on Thursday 16 September 1976;
- b. you should explain explicitly to Mr Lavigne that during the remainder of his agreement, which is to lapse on 9 September 1976, he will only be required to fly in accordance with express instructions from you to be framed after consultation with me. On any occasion governed by such instructions he must be accompanied by a mechanic to assist and advise him in the handling of the aircraft on water;
- c. your Report, and Mr Managasabai's findings which preceded it, will not be made public. In deciding this I have exercised the discretion conferred upon me under Regulation 9 to determine whether any such Report should be made public if I see fit to do so.

/s/leaso

CONFIDENTIAL

Please accept my best thanks for yourself, and convey my appreciation to Captain J Kerr and Mr Managasabai, for the prompt and efficient manner in which the investigation into this accident was undertaken.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'W. A. I. French', with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

W. A. I. French  
Governor and  
Commander-in-Chief  
Falkland Islands

CONFIDENTIAL

PERSONAL AND  
CONFIDENTIAL

Chief Secretary's Office,  
Stanley.

24th August 1976

The Hon L G Blake, JP  
Mill Cove

The Hon A B Monk, JP  
San Carlos

The Hon A B Hadden, BSM  
Goose Green

ACCIDENT TO BEAVER AIRCRAFT VP-FAL

Immediately I had news of the accident to VP-FAL I instituted an inquiry in accordance with the Civil Aviation (Investigation of Accidents) Regulations, and His Excellency the Governor appointed Mr Kanagasabai to conduct it. The results were then considered by myself, Captain J Kerr and Mr Kanagasabai and the report submitted to His Excellency in accordance with the law.

2. In our report to the Governor we accept the inspector's findings that contributory cause to the accident was the lack of experience of the pilot in the handling of float 'planes on water in difficult weather conditions. We recommended that Government should retain Mr Lavigne until the expiry of his contract on 9 September 1976 for emergency operations only and that in the event that Mr Lavigne is called upon to fly he must be accompanied by a technician to advise and assist him on the handling of the 'plane on water.

3. At the time this report was being considered Captain Kerr was taken into hospital and I am informed by the SMO that he will be out of action for about a week.

4. Government was thus placed in a most difficult situation and the pressure on it to allow Mr Lavigne to fly regular flights on FIGAS are extraordinarily strong but in the face of this, Government has had to take a decision that it would be unwise -indeed almost reckless- to hazard the one remaining aircraft. Government has therefore had to choose the course that ensures at least some contact in emergency cases.

5. Captain I Campbell is due back in the Colony on 9 September. He had asked for an extension of leave but we have had to telegraph emphasizing that he should be back on time.

6. As the apportionment of blame could raise complex legal questions which could involve Government in expensive litigation, His Excellency the Governor has decided that the report of the inquiry shall not be made public. He has thus exercised his powers in accordance with the law as contained in the Regulations referred to above. I should be grateful therefore if in making use of this information on need-to-know basis you refrain from any reference to the apportionment of blame to Captain Lavigne, for although the inquiry indicated that the handling of the aircraft on the water was a contributory cause ~~of~~ the accident sufficient to make Government take safeguards against a recurrence, it is debatable in law whether this amounts to legal culpability.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

A J P Monk  
Chief Secretary.

cc. His Excellency the Governor.

W.



BROADCAST ANNOUNCEMENT

(To be broadcast at 6.30 p.m. and 7.15 p.m. tonight and prior to broadcast at 10 a.m. tomorrow, 25th)

Government Announcement :-

AIR SERVICE

The Government has today elaborated on the necessarily brief announcement made yesterday about the temporary curtailment of air services.

Following the accident to one Beaver, some regulation of the air services became inevitable, because the remaining Beaver had only some 300 hours flying time left before its routine major inspection. The position took on new urgency when Captain Kerr became unwell over the week-end and was admitted to hospital. It was at this point that the Government issued its preliminary announcement, pending urgent examination of the options ~~obligations~~ open to it.

All Heads of Departments have now considered how to cut inconveniences to a minimum by meeting the most important commitments like servicing of the Camp, the return of Darwin school children to their homes and, most important of all, medical visits. The Government is satisfied that Camp medical touring will continue unimpeded.

It is hoped that Captain Kerr will be fit for restricted flying duties next week, and Captain Campbell is due to return on 9th September. Though the Government is not yet in a position to make a full announcement, it

/can be said

can be said at this stage that energetic negotiations have been in progress for some time for the acquisition of replacement Beavers, but it is not likely that any replacements can be expected in this current emergency.

The Secretariat,  
Stanley.

24 August 1976.

m.

CONFIDENTIAL  
**MEMORANDUM**

24

Reference AIR/7/30

Date 25 August 1976

From Airport Superintendent

To Chief Secretary

Subject: Relevant Air Legislations and Reports that have a bearing on the Beaver accident of 11 August 1976.

Reference your request of me to peruse the Civil Aviation Authority Report on the Falkland Islands Government Air Service, and the Air Navigation (Overseas Territories) Order 1976 and report on relevant sections that may have a bearing on the recent Beaver aircraft accident of 11 August 1976. I have to report as follows:-

1. Pilot Licencing.

(Section 4.1.1 of the C.A.A. report, p6)

The pilots employed by the Air Service hold Commercial Pilots Licences issued by the Falkland Islands Colony Dept of Civil Aviation. The licences were originally issued on the production of evidence of holding then current U.K. Commercial Pilot Licences. This procedure conforms with the requirements of the Colonial Air Navigation Order 1961.

Article 21, p26 of the Air Navigation (OT) Order 1976 makes provision for H.E. the Governor to validate any licence.

Article 20, p24 of the Air Navigation (OT) Order 1976 also makes provision for H.E. the Governor to grant licences.

Was Mr Lavigne issued a licence under any of these provisions?

2. Personal Flying Log Book.

Article 22, p26 of the Air Navigation (OT) Order of 1976 says that all Pilots should keep a Personal Flying Log Book.

Mr Lavigne has not complied with these requirements.

3. Medical Examination for Pilots.

Section 9.4.14, p19 of the C.A.A. Report recommends that the pilots shall be medically examined every six months, in accordance with the provision of Article 16(1), (2)(c) of the Colonial Air Navigation Order 1961.

Article 16(6) C.A.N.O. 1961 to 1972.

In pursuant to Article 16(6) of the Colonial Air Navigation Orders 1961 to 1972 H.E. the Governor has decreed that all holders of CPL (Commercial Pilots Licence) must undergo medical test every six months.

But Mr Lavigne's record who holds a CPL shows that he had his last medical test on 15-12-75 i.e. more than six months ago on the date of his accident on Beaver (11-8-76). Why did he not renew it?

4. Operational Restrictions.

Section 3.3.1 (p5) of the C.A.A. Report states that "Experience indicates that it is inadvisable to carry out routine passenger flights when the wind speed at Stanley base is in excess of 20 kt or similarly if such winds are reported from destinations in the Camp."

The wind reported at New Island before the accident was 30 to 35 knots gusty. Why was operation carried out under these conditions?

Section 3.3.2 (p5) of the C.A.A. Report states that "should weather conditions deteriorate in flight, the pilots are instructed to abandon part or whole of the remaining flight plan to ensure a safe return to Stanley".

Why was this not done by the pilot if the weather was bad?

5. Operations Manual.

Sections 4.5.1 and 4.5.2 (p9) of the C.A.A. Report refers to the requirements of Article 21 of the Colonial Air Navigation Order which makes it obligatory on an air operator to make available an Operations Manual to all operating staff and carry one in the aircraft. This is again recommended in the C.A.A. Report Sections 9.1 and 9.2.

But this Operations Manual was not produced during the inquiry by the pilot or the engineer. Therefore it may be assumed that the Superintendent of Civil Aviation may have not compiled one of these and issued to the operating staff.

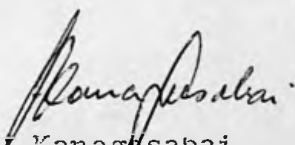
6. Observation in Section 4.10.5 of the C.A.A. Report (p12).

Will be grateful for a ruling on this practice. Suggest that attendance at the airport if necessary (until the new airport is opened) be the responsibility of the Superintendent of Airport in keeping with the opinion expressed by C.A.A.:

"The Superintendent of Civil Aviation would then be free for flying or administrative duties"

7. Observations in Section 5.2 (p14) of the C.A.A. Report.

It will be desirable if the Government studies the aspect of this observation, namely of the last para of Section 5.2 and take appropriate steps.

  
S. Kanagasabai  
Superintendent of Airport.

m.

CONFIDENTIAL

His Excellency the Governor.

Y.E. ✓ *26/8*

VP-TAL

Following the report by the inspector, I asked Mr Kanagasabai to look at our legislation to see if our procedures and practices were in any way at fault. He has produced the most helpful report attached hereto. There are five important points:-

✓  
✓  
✓  
✓  
✓

- 1. That temporary pilots should have their licences properly issued and validated by Y.E.;
- 2. That personal flying log books must be maintained;
- 3. That pilots must be medically examined every six months. I know this is being done for our regular pilots, but it does not appear to have been the case for Mr Lavigne;
- 4. Pilots should abort if weather conditions deteriorate;
- 5. The Operations Manual should be brought up to date and a copy kept by each mechanic and pilot.

I do not propose to worry Captain Kerr about these matters at present, although I have already briefly referred to the question of the Operations Manual, which I understand is already compiled in part and copies are kept by Captain Kerr and Captain Campbell. At some reasonably close future date we must return to these matters to see that requirements are strictly adhered to.

This fresh report makes it even more important that the inquiry carried out into the accident must be regarded as a closed one.

*Place  
Palak  
this is  
done.*

*C.S.*

26 August 1976.

*C.S. Excellent. I am in full agreement*

CONFIDENTIAL

*27/8*

STRICTLY PERSONAL  
AND CONFIDENTIAL

27th August 1976

John Lavigne Esq  
Stanley

Dear Sir,

I refer to our discussion early this week and confirm the understanding that I communicated to you then, as follows:-

1. In accordance with your Agreement, Government proposes that the term of your engagement should finish on 9 September 1976, after which you would be entitled to one week's leave on salary and a return passage to Montreal.
2. One contributory cause of the accident to VF-FAL was your lack of experience in handling float 'planes on water in difficult weather conditions.
3. That during the remainder of your engagement it will be necessary to husband the remaining hours on the other aircraft, Alpha-Kilo, and such flying will have to receive my express authorisation on each occasion.
4. On the occasions that you are required to fly, you should be accompanied by a mechanic to assist and advise you in the handling of the aircraft on water.
5. Government will honour its obligations under the Agreement.

I have expressed to you that as an old pilot myself I fully appreciate that you may consider that this decision reflects on you personally or on your ability as a pilot. I emphasise in this connection that in the

view of the inspector appointed by His Excellency the Governor, it was only the lack of experience in the handling of float 'planes on water that was a contributory cause of the accident. You are by no means the first person to have encountered such problems and many of these are of a highly localized nature, with which experience elsewhere in the world does little to acquaint the pilot.

In addition to the above and so as to help you make decisions in difficult circumstances, it is only fair to give you some guidelines as to the conditions in which you should operate. Accordingly, if the weather indicates wind speeds in excess of 20 knots you should seek my personal and additional authority to undertake the flight. If the weather deteriorates so rapidly while you are in flight, you should abandon that part or the whole of the remaining flight plan to ensure a safe return to Stanley. And of course you will have the independent advice of a mechanic to assist you.

You will appreciate that this guidance is given not to restrict you unnecessarily but merely to assist you in coming to decisions in difficult circumstances, which is the sort of information which I am sure is normally included in an operator's manual.

Yours faithfully,

A J P Monk  
Chief Secretary.

m.

Silent copies:

Capt J Kerr, MBE  
Chief Technicians C Bramley  
I Bridges

Note:

You should destroy this letter as soon as you have read it and not disclose its contents to Capt Lavigne.

C.S.

.....  
To be detached and returned to the Chief Secretary:- .....

I certify having read and destroyed the above letter.

..... Date:

AIR/7/3

9/76

8. Accident to Beaver Aircraft VP-FAL

8. 1. Immediately following an accident to this aircraft while taxiing at New Island on 11th August 1976 under the command of Captain Lavigne, which resulted in the aircraft overturning and becoming partially submerged the Airport Superintendent, Mr. Kanagasabai, had been appointed in accordance with the law to carry out an investigation into the causes of the accident.
8. 2. A Board of Enquiry under the chairmanship of the Chief Secretary and consisting of the Superintendent of Civil Aviation and the Superintendent of the Airport considered the report of the inspector into the causes of the accident and concluded that the inexperience of the pilot with float planes was a contributory factor.
8. 3. Consequent upon the findings of the Board His Excellency directed that Captain Lavigne's contract should be allowed to lapse on 9th September as planned and that meanwhile he would only be required to fly on the express instructions of the Chief Secretary in virtually a life or death situation and must be accompanied by a mechanic to assist and advise on the handling of the aircraft on water.
8. 4. His Excellency exercised his discretion under Regulation 9 of the Civil Aviation (Investigation of Accidents) Regulations 1959 and directed that the reports of the Inspector and the Board of Enquiry should not be made public.
8. 5. Council approved the action of the Administration and acknowledged the need carefully to husband the remaining flying time of the other aircraft (VP-FAK).
8. 6. Council was advised that every effort would be made to obtain another Beaver aircraft as soon as possible. Captain Campbell would now be returning on 9th September as originally planned.



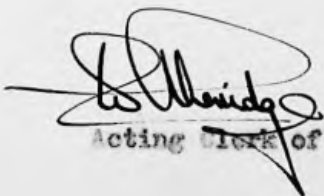
EXTRACT FROM THE MINUTES OF EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEETING NO. 12/76  
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 15TH SEPTEMBER 1976

AIR/7/3

2. 3. Beaver Aircraft VP-FAL (9/76 - 8)

12/76

Council was advised that this aircraft would never fly again in the service of F.I.G.A.S. as it would require expensive test and overhaul facilities not available in the Islands.

  
Acting Clerk of Councils