

Cessna 421C, G-BHKJ

AAIB Bulletin No: 5/2002 Ref: EW/G2001/05/31

Category: 1.2

INCIDENT

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| Aircraft Type and Registration: | Cessna 421C, G-BHKJ | |
| No & Type of Engines: | 2 Continental GTSIO-520-L piston engines | |
| Year of Manufacture: | 1980 | |
| Date & Time (UTC): | 23 May 2001 at 1400 hrs | |
| Location: | RAF Lyneham | |
| Type of Flight: | Private | |
| Persons on Board: | Crew - 2 | Passengers - 5 |
| Injuries: | Crew - None | Passengers - None |
| Nature of Damage: | Propeller blade damaged | |
| Commander's Licence: | Private Pilots Licence with IMC and Night Rating | |
| Commander's Age: | 47 years | |
| Commander's Flying Experience: | 922 hours (of which 489 were on type) | |
| | Last 90 days 22 hours | |
| | Last 28 days - 4 hours | |
| Information Source: | Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot and RAF Flight Safety Investigation Report. | |

The aircraft, which had arrived at RAF Lyneham earlier that morning, was due to depart later that afternoon. At 1200 hrs a starter crew from the RAF Visiting Aircraft Section (VAS) approached the pilot, who was by his aircraft, and enquired as to his expected start time. He was unsure, as his passengers had yet to arrive, but estimated an engine start time of 1230 hrs. The starter crew therefore returned to their accommodation to await his call having left a CO2 fire extinguisher in front of the nose wheel in preparation for the start. At 1228 hrs the pilot transmitted on Lyneham ground frequency that he estimated start in 5 minutes. He did not however request that this information be passed to VAS or Station Operations. Eventually at 1250 hrs a request for start was made and approved and both engines were started without the presence of a starter crew.

After receiving taxi clearance the pilot manoeuvred the aircraft forward and to the left. After travelling approximately 2 metres he heard a loud bang and saw debris emanating from the starboard side of the aircraft. At the same time two RAF tradesmen, working approximately 100 metres away, heard a bang and saw a metallic object land near to them. They immediately ran towards the aircraft indicating for it to stop. Emergency services were not required to attend the scene as there were no injuries and no signs of fluids leaking from the aircraft.

Subsequent examination of the aircraft revealed that one of the propeller blades on the right engine was damaged and loose in the hub assembly. The CO2 extinguisher had also sustained a slice through the applicator assembly. Parts from the broken extinguisher were found close to other aircraft parked nearby.

As a result of this occurrence the RAF carried out a Flight Safety Investigation and recommended that in future the RAF Lyneham VAS should provide guidance to visiting aircrew on how to contact Station Operations and VAS, that they should not start engines without a VAS member present and requests to ATC should contain their exact requirements. Furthermore they recommended that ground servicing and support equipment should not be left outside the boxes specifically painted next to the parking bays.