

Aircraft type and registration: Cessna 421C G-OABI

No & Type of engines: 2 Continental GTSIO-520-L piston engines

Year of Manufacture: 1979

Date and time (GMT): 11 November 1987 at 1854 hrs

Location: Fair Oaks Airport, Chobham, Surrey

Type of flight: Private (Business)

Persons on board: Crew — 1 Passengers — None

Injuries: Crew — None Passengers — N/A

Nature of damage: Substantial damage to engine and propeller, minor damage to engine cowling

Commander's Licence: ATPL (H) and Private Pilot's Licence

Commander's Age: 38 years

Commander's Total Flying Experience: 4506 hours (of which 718 were fixed wing with 136 on type)

Information Source: AAIB Field Investigation

The aircraft was returning to its base at Fair Oaks Airport and had been set up for a visual approach to runway 24. At about 300 feet on final approach, shortly after the pilot had selected the propellers to maximum rpm, there was a muffled bang and the aircraft yawed violently to the right. The complete propeller assembly had separated from the right hand engine. The engine was shut down and the aircraft landed without further damage.

The propeller was recovered from soft ground ½ nm short of the runway, it was attached to the propeller shaft and a section of the top of the crankcase assembly.

The engine crankshaft carries three pairs of counter weights, loosely pinned to crankshaft blade extensions, the pair of weights located between numbers 5 and 6 connecting rod bearings was detached. One weight was substantially intact and still contained a portion of the blade extension which had failed in overload; the other weight was in 3, heavily damaged, pieces. Damage to the crankcase, which extended to the oil filler pipe and was responsible for the propeller assembly detachment, was consistent with the release of a balance weight. The engine is to be returned to the manufacturers for continued investigation.