

No: 4/84

Ref: EW/A304/01

Aircraft type and registration: Piper PA28-161 G-JUNE (light single engine aircraft)
Year of manufacture: 1977
Date and time (GMT): 12 January 1984 at 1225 hrs
Location: 65° 17'N 035° 21.7'W
Type of flight: Delivery
Persons on board: Crew — 1 Passengers — Nil
Injuries: Crew — Nil Passengers — N/A
Nature of damage: Aircraft destroyed
Commander's Licence: FAA Airline Transport Pilot's Licence
Commander's Age: Not known
Commander's total flying experience: Not known

The aircraft took off from Reykjavik, Iceland, at 0752 hrs to fly to Sondrestrom, Greenland. The pilot had attended a met briefing before his flight but he left behind the written route forecast. The forecast weather for his intended cruising level (Flight Level 120) was: wind-variable or north easterly 6-15 Kts, temperature -30° becoming -40°, cloud 6/8 cumulus base 1000 ft tops 9000 ft.

The flight was uneventful until 1212 hrs when the pilot reported that he was having engine problems and was losing power. The engine rpm was decreasing suddenly, then returning to normal and stabilizing for about one minute before decreasing again. By 1218 hrs the aircraft had descended to 4000 feet, and shortly afterwards ATC lost radar contact. The aircraft continued to lose height and the pilot landed it on an ice flow about 50 nm east of Kulusuk, Greenland. The pilot managed to deploy his liferaft before the aircraft slid off the flow, and he then operated his emergency locator radio beacon, which was on frequency 121.5 MHz.

The Flight Information Centre at Sondre Strumfjord directed a search and rescue operation under the overall control of the Rescue Control Centre, Bodo. A Grumman Gulfstream and a Bell 212 were involved. The Gulfstream picked up the beacon signals and located the pilot at 1329 hrs, the Bell 212 lifting him at 1333 hrs. At 1338 hrs the FIC received a message from the RCC that information from the search and rescue satellite SARSAT indicated an emergency beacon signal in approximate position 65° 08.5'N 035° 38.2'W.

The pilot stated that as most of the flight was conducted in cloud carburettor heat was on at all times but he still suspected carburettor ice was the reason for the engine malfunctioning. Analysis of fuel samples taken from the refueller at Reykjavik showed no contamination. The pilot reported that he had carried out water drain checks before flight and that no water was observed.