

No: 7/86

Ref: 1b

Aircraft type and registration: Piper PA 18—150 Super Cub G-PULL

No & Type of engines: 1 Avco Lycoming O-320-A2B piston engine

Year of Manufacture: 1957

Date and time (GMT): 13 June 1986 at 1920 hrs

Location: Eaglescott Aerodrome, Barnstable, N Devon

Type of flight: Private (pleasure)

Persons on board: Crew — 1 Passengers — None

Injuries: Crew — 1 (Fatal) Passengers — N/A

Nature of damage: Aircraft destroyed

Commander's Licence: Private Pilot's Licence

Commander's Age: 19 years

Commander's Total Flying Experience: 118 hours (of which 44 were on type)

Information Source: AIB Field Investigation.

The pilot was employed by a flying club to operate their Super Cub, largely for glider towing. He qualified to the satisfaction of the club's Chief Flying Instructor (CFI) on 1 April 1986 and, thereafter, was self-authorising. At 1800 hrs, following a day of flying, during which the tug pilot had accomplished two flights of 35 minutes and 2 hours 55 minutes respectively, the CFI left the club.

Shortly before 1840 hrs the pilot hurried from the clubhouse to the Super Cub, climbed in, started up and immediately took off in a northerly direction with a glider tow rope attached. The reported wind was northerly at 5 knots. On becoming airborne the aircraft was seen to bank steeply to the right, with the wing tip 2 or 3 feet above the ground, pass between the active Runway 26 and the tumuli on the airfield and make a very heavy downwind landing on the right main wheel. The pilot taxied the aircraft back to the hangar, shut down the engine and removed the tow rope.

At 1919 hrs the pilot was again seen to board the aircraft, start up, execute a rapid 360° "clearing" turn and immediately take-off along the same path as previously. Once airborne, the aircraft again performed a very steeply banked right turn within the airfield boundary, climbing to a height estimated as less than 100 feet. As it passed through a north easterly heading the engine speed was heard to reduce somewhat and, a few seconds later, to reduce smoothly to somewhere near idle RPM. At this point the bank angle increased and the nose of the aircraft sliced downwards and the aircraft struck the ground.

The aircraft crashed in level grassed terrain 25 metres south of the centre line of Runway 26 while heading 310°M. Wreckage and ground mark examination indicated that at the time of impact the aircraft was approximately 45° nose down, was banked about 45° right wing down, and was yawing to the right whilst skidding to the left. The right wing tip hit the ground first, and the

aircraft cartwheeled heavily onto the nose and left wing before coming to rest vertically nose down with the engine and forward fuselage grossly displaced. The propeller was turning at the time of impact at a speed estimated to be slightly above idle.

The pilot died from injuries sustained in the crash. There was no fire. Neither the pilot's medical history nor a post-mortem examination suggested any factor likely to have contributed to the accident.

Records indicated that the aircraft had been maintained in accordance with an approved schedule. The estimated centre of gravity of the aircraft at the time of the accident was within limits. Wreckage examination revealed no evidence of pre-impact failure or malfunction of the aircraft or its power-plant.

RECONSTRUCTION OF FLIGHT PATHS

