

Piper PA-24-250 Comanche, N7348P

AAIB Bulletin No: 10/2002	Ref: EW/G2002/05/11	Category: 1.3
Aircraft Type and Registration:	Piper PA-24-250 Comanche, N7348P	
No & Type of Engines:	1 Lycoming 0-540 piston engine	
Year of Manufacture:	1961	
Date & Time (UTC):	22 May 2002 at 1338 hrs	
Location:	400 metres north of Gamston Airport	
Type of Flight:	Private	
Persons on Board:	Crew - 1	Passengers - 1
Injuries:	Crew - Serious	Passengers - None
Nature of Damage:	Damage to nose landing gear, nose wheel well, engine mount support area, propeller, right main landing gear and right wing	
Commander's Licence:	Private Pilots Licence	
Commander's Age:	66 years	
Commander's Flying Experience:	1,055 hours (of which 200 were on type)	
	Last 90 days - 15 hours	
	Last 28 days - 6 hours	
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot and subsequent AAIB enquiries.	

While preparing the aircraft at Netherthorpe for his weekly flight, the pilot dipped the fuel tanks and measured two inches of fuel in each of the two main tanks and the left auxiliary tank. The right auxiliary tank was empty. He calculated that the fuel on board amounted to 15 gall US in total. His intention had been to refuel before departing for a local area flight. However, because of a lack of fuel at Netherthorpe that afternoon, he decided to fly to Gamston, which is only 9 nm distant, to refuel there.

The aircraft departed from Runway 18 and flew direct towards Gamston. In good weather, it transited at or below 1,500 feet, with the fuel selected to feed from the left main tank. The wind at Gamston was reported as southerly at 20 kt. A crosswind join was flown for Runway 21 and the

downwind checks were completed. The aircraft turned onto final approach at 600 feet. At approximately 300 feet and about 0.5 nm from the runway, the engine stopped.

The pilot selected a cornfield 15° to the right of the nose and carried out a forced landing. He described the landing as being slightly heavy. As a result, the nose landing gear collapsed, the propeller blades were bent, and the right main landing gear and rear of the right wing were damaged.

The pilot called Gamston airfield on the radio to advise them of his predicament. Gamston had already alerted their rescue and fire fighting crew after becoming aware that the aircraft had encountered a problem on final approach. The aircraft was quickly located. Both the pilot and his passenger were able to exit the aircraft normally and there was no fire. The passenger was uninjured, but the pilot suffered a serious injury to his back during the landing.

Following the accident, the pilot reported that 12 gall US of fuel were discovered on board, but that the left main tank, which was selected at the time, was "almost empty". He stated with candour that if he had changed the fuel selector to the right inner (main) tank for the approach to Gamston, then the accident would have been prevented.