

Piper PA-25-260 (Modified), G-TOWS, 25 January 1997

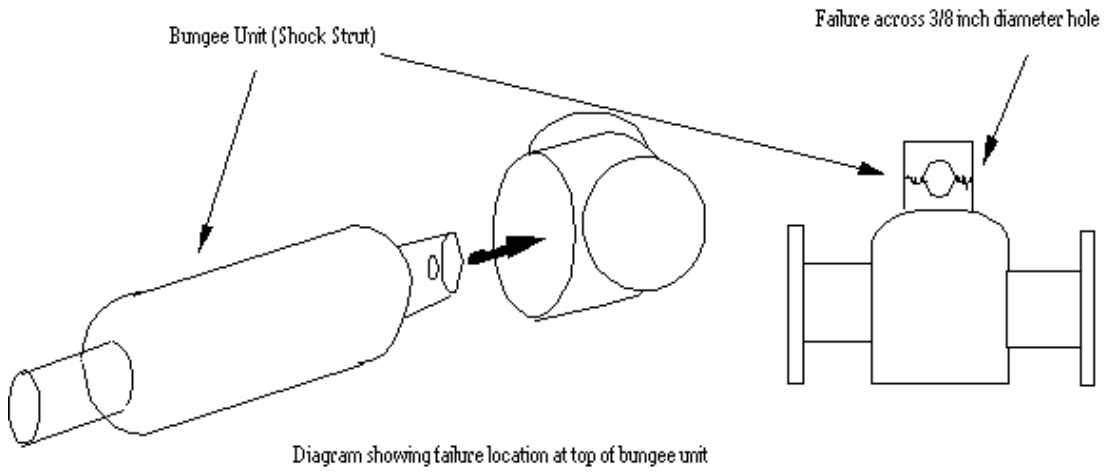
AAIB Bulletin No: 4/97 Ref: EW/G97/01/19 Category: 1.3

Aircraft Type and Registration:	Piper PA-25-260 (Modified), G-TOWS
No & Type of Engines:	1 Lycoming O-540-B2C5 piston engine
Year of Manufacture:	1969
Date & Time (UTC):	25 January 1997 at 1635 hrs
Location:	Lasham Aerodrome, Hampshire
Type of Flight:	Private
Persons on Board:	Crew - 1 - Passengers - None
Injuries:	Crew - None - Passengers - N/A
Nature of Damage:	Damage to left wing and main gear
Commander's Licence:	Private Pilot's Licence
Commander's Age:	48 years
Commander's Flying Experience:	436 hours (of which 43 were on type) Last 90 days -7 hours Last 28 days -3 hours
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot and discussion with the maintenance organisation

The pilot began his glider towing duties at 1400 hrs in the aircraft which had received its daily inspection before the day's flying. Circuits were right hand to 09 south, and the landing surface was level and firm, the grass being short. On completing twelve towing flights the pilot landed the aircraft and allowed it to slow to a slow taxi speed. After 100 metres the left gear collapsed, the left wheel jammed under the leading edge of the wing, and the aircraft stopped within 10 metres, having turned through 180°. The fuel, magneto and electrical systems were immediately turned off and the pilot evacuated the aircraft.

A failure had occurred to a suspension unit in which an old crack had grown through approximately 80% of the metal before the final 20% had failed in overload. Further investigation revealed that the right suspension unit was in a similar condition. The engineering organisation had observed wear at

the upper shock strut attachment, had ordered the replacement parts and had deferred the defect. The point of failure was hidden from view unless the assembly was dismantled.



The aircraft had flown for 5,782 hours; the number of landings was unknown, but during towing at Lasham it averaged 6 landings per hour.