

Cessna 120, G-AJTT

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| AAIB Bulletin No: 8/2003 | Ref: EW/G2003/05/20 | Category: 1.3 |
| Aircraft Type and Registration: | Cessna 120, G-AJTT | |
| No & Type of Engines: | 1 Continental C85-12F piston engine | |
| Year of Manufacture: | 1947 | |
| Date & Time (UTC): | 26 May 2003 at 1100 hrs | |
| Location: | East Pennard Farm Strip, near Shepton Mallet, Somerset | |
| Type of Flight: | Private | |
| Persons on Board: | Crew - 1 | Passengers - None |
| Injuries: | Crew - None | Passengers - N/A |
| Nature of Damage: | Damage to fin, windscreen, starboard wing and wing strut | |
| Commander's Licence: | Private Pilot's Licence (USA) | |
| Commander's Age: | 56 years | |
| Commander's Flying Experience: | 121 hours (of which 90 were on type) Last 90 days - 13 hours Last 28 days - 4 hours | |
| Information Source: | Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot and further AAIB enquiries | |

The pilot was practising circuits at a farm strip where he kept the aircraft. He had gone around from the first two approaches as he was unhappy with his speed and position. On the third approach he found he was about 5 mph fast, but considered this acceptable and so he continued. On rounding out the aircraft floated a little and touched down further into the strip than normal.

During the rollout the pilot became concerned because he was unsure about the length of strip remaining. Since the aircraft was a tail wheel type, he had to strain forwards in order to look over the engine cowling to try and see the fence that delineated the end of the strip. In so doing the pilot thought he relaxed the backpressure that he had been maintaining on the control column. He then applied the brakes but with more force than he had intended, locking the wheels and causing the aircraft to skid forward about three metres. At this time the aircraft was travelling at approximately 20 mph and it tipped forwards, striking the propeller on the ground. The strike broke the wooden propeller and stalled the engine. The aircraft then continued to tip forwards until it came to rest on its roof.

As the aircraft rolled over, the pilot had the presence of mind to switch 'OFF' the magnetos and electrical master switch. He then found himself upside down in his seat, held in by his seat belt. He supported himself against the roof with one hand and released the seat belt with the other, lowering

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himself onto the roof before opening his door and vacating uninjured from the aircraft. Once standing outside he noticed the landing light was on and, upon investigating further, found that a number of electrical switches, including the master switch, were now back in the 'ON' position. The pilot stated that it is possible that he had knocked the switches whilst trying to extricate himself from the cockpit. He also commented that the lap strap and diagonal strap had worked well in restraining him during the accident. The diagonal strap had been a modification to the aircraft and he was particularly grateful for its presence.

The pilot had gained most of his flying experience on tail wheel type aircraft but this had largely been conducted using a tarmac runway. He had only been flying from the farm strip for about four months. The strip was approximately 400 metres long and in hindsight he considered that, had he chosen not to brake on this occasion, he would still have had sufficient distance remaining to stop before the airfield boundary. His decision had however been affected by his difficulty in judging the exact distance to the end of the strip due to the restricted forward visibility.

The pilot stated that with his limited level of experience in operating to such short grass strips he would have benefited from more flights to this type of airfield, in the company of an instructor so as to familiarise himself more with the particular difficulties they pose.