

**AAIB Bulletin No:** 3/95

**Ref:** EW/G95/02/01

**Category:** 1.3

**Aircraft Type and Registration:** Piper PA-32R-301 Saratoga, G-SULL

**No & Type of Engines:** 1 Lycoming IO-540-K1G5D piston engine

**Year of Manufacture:** 1981

**Date & Time (UTC):** 1 February 1995 at 0840 hrs

**Location:** Crowfield Airfield, Suffolk

**Type of Flight:** Private

**Persons on Board:** Crew - 2                      Passengers - 1

**Injuries:** Crew - None                      Passengers - None

**Nature of Damage:** Substantial to landing gear, propeller, fuselage and right wing

**Commander's Licence:** Private Pilot's Licence with Night Rating

**Commander's Age:** 47 years

**Commander's Flying Experience:** 2,982 hours (of which 1,217 were on type)  
Last 90 days - 18 hours  
Last 28 days - 6 hours

**Information Source:** Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot

The airfield at Crowfield has a grass runway which at the time of the accident was soft after a long period of very wet weather. The pilot was aware of the state of the runway but having operated from Crowfield for three years, was of the opinion that its condition was satisfactory for takeoff. The weather at the time was overcast with light to moderate rain and a light and variable surface wind. Given the conditions, the pilot elected to use Runway 31 which has a downslope and a Take-off Run Available of 850 metres. Having commenced his take-off run from a rolling start, the pilot noted that initial acceleration was good and that the engine was developing full power. At this stage the pilot was confident that the aircraft would become airborne well before the end of the runway and selected one stage of flap. At this point, the aircraft entered a particularly wet area of the runway and began to slow. After a short time, the aircraft resumed its normal rate of acceleration but there was by now insufficient runway remaining for it to get airborne. The aircraft overran the runway and came to rest in the adjacent field.

The pilot attributed the cause of the accident to his failure to fully appreciate the surface condition of the runway and his failure to recognise the need to abandon the take off in sufficient time to avoid the overrun.