

## ACCIDENT

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| <b>Aircraft Type and Registration:</b> | Piper PA-39 Twin Comanche C/R, G-LARE  |                   |
| <b>No &amp; Type of Engines:</b>       | 2 Lycoming IO-320-B1A piston engines   |                   |
| <b>Year of Manufacture:</b>            | 1970 (Serial no: 39-16)  |                   |
| <b>Date &amp; Time (UTC):</b>          | 15 September 2017 at 1150 hrs  |                   |
| <b>Location:</b>                       | Biggin Hill Airport, Bromley   |                   |
| <b>Type of Flight:</b>                 | Private  |                   |
| <b>Persons on Board:</b>               | Crew - 2   | Passengers - None |
| <b>Injuries:</b>                       | Crew - None  | Passengers - N/A  |
| <b>Nature of Damage:</b>               | Propellers and ADF antenna broken, air-scoop squashed, slight scruff on tail tiedown         |                   |
| <b>Commander's Licence:</b>            | Airline Transport Pilot's Licence  |                   |
| <b>Commander's Age:</b>                | 61 years   |                   |
| <b>Commander's Flying Experience:</b>  | 18,000 hours (of which 80 were on type)<br>Last 90 days - 20 hours<br>Last 28 days - 5 hours |                   |
| <b>Information Source:</b>             | Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot and examiner                            |                   |

## Synopsis

The pilot flying and examiner were on the final circuit of a two-hour flight to revalidate an instrument rating and a multi-engine proficiency check. Downwind, the aircraft was configured for a simulated asymmetric approach and landing, with intermediate flaps selected and undercarriage down. They were instructed by ATC to orbit to the left once, late downwind, due to two aircraft ahead of them joining the circuit to land. During the orbit the pilot flying retracted the flaps and undercarriage and neither he nor the examiner realised they were still retracted on the approach to land. During the flare the propellers and rear fuselage contacted the ground and a go-around was immediately initiated. A circuit was flown and an uneventful landing made.

## History of the flight

After flying to Southend, where the pilot flying had just revalidated his instrument rating, the pilot and examiner returned towards Biggin Hill for the pilot to complete a multi-engine proficiency check. The check concluded at Biggin Hill where a number of circuits were to be flown.

Downwind on the final circuit, the aircraft was configured for a simulated asymmetric approach and landing, with intermediate flaps selected and undercarriage down. ATC informed them that they were number two to a Spitfire and Hurricane (based at Biggin Hill)

ahead of them and instructed them to orbit to the left once, late downwind. During the orbit, the pilot retracted the flaps and undercarriage; however, the examiner, whose attention was on the aircraft ahead of them and was not expecting a change in configuration, missed this. After receiving clearance to land, the pilot positioned the aircraft for the approach to land, but neither he nor the examiner realised that the flaps and undercarriage were retracted, and no further landing checks were made. As the aircraft flared, they both heard the propellers and rear fuselage contact the ground and a go-around was immediately initiated. During the ensuing circuit, they realised that the undercarriage was retracted. This was then extended and the aircraft landed without further incident.

The examiner, who was the commander for the flight<sup>1</sup>, attributed the loss of awareness of the fact that the undercarriage had been retracted to a high workload at the end of a busy two-hour flight, with an unusual ATC instruction to orbit late downwind. Both he and the pilot flying were pre-occupied with carrying out this instruction while trying to make visual contact with the aircraft ahead of them and did not give any thought to making additional checks prior to landing.

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**Footnote**

<sup>1</sup> The pilot flying was acting as Pilot in Command for the revalidation and check-out flight.

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