

Piper PA-30 Twin Comanche, N8326Y

AAIB Bulletin No: 6/2004	Ref: EW/G2003/12/02	Category: 1.3
Aircraft Type and Registration:	Piper PA-30 Twin Comanche, N8326Y	
No & Type of Engines:	2 Lycoming IO-320-B1A piston engines	
Year of Manufacture:	1967	
Date & Time (UTC):	5 December 2003 at 1757 hrs	
Location:	Jersey Airport	
Type of Flight:	Private	
Persons on Board:	Crew - 1	Passengers - 2
Injuries:	Crew - None	Passengers - None
Nature of Damage:	Damage to fuselage underside, nosewheel doors and propellers	
Commander's Licence:	Commercial Pilot's Licence	
Commander's Age:	46 years	
Commander's Flying Experience:	896 hours (of which 20 were on type)	
	Last 90 days - 30 hours	
	Last 28 days - 10 hours	
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot	

The aircraft, which was based in Belgium, had taken off from Jersey on a flight to Kortrijk (Flanders International Airport). After a period of about 20 minutes, whilst under the control of Brest Air Traffic Control, they advised the pilot that his transponder code was not being received. The pilot checked and reset his transponder without success and he was then refused entry into controlled airspace. He decided to return to Jersey. Shortly afterwards his communications radio transmitter seemed to fail as well, followed shortly by a complete failure of all electrical power.

The pilot declared an emergency to Jersey using a hand-held radio and received radar vectors to return to the airport: he subsequently praised the assistance rendered by Jersey Air Traffic Control throughout the emergency. He lowered the landing gear using the emergency system, completing the landing checks and monitoring the instruments by the light of a torch held by a passenger. Because he had no means of checking that the gear was locked-down, he performed two passes of the tower, who confirmed that it appeared to be in the extended position. He made an approach on Runway 09 but, during the landing roll, the nose gear collapsed, shortly followed by both main gears. After a short ground slide, the aircraft came to rest on the runway and the occupants evacuated normally without injury.

The Belgian company that maintained N8326Y visited Jersey some 6 weeks later to inspect the aircraft. They found that although the battery was now weak it still provided electrical power. After

the accident the gear had been manually placed in the down and locked position and the landing gear indicating lights now illuminated 'three greens'. They were unable to reproduce any problems with the electrical system. As the aircraft was not on jacks, no attempt was made to investigate the operation of the landing gear emergency extension mechanism.

The owner's insurance company advised that although the aircraft was declared a total loss by themselves, primarily due to the costs of shipping to a mainland repair organisation, the salvage has been purchased with a view to rebuilding it. This is estimated to take a considerable period of time, during which the problems referred to above will be investigated in-depth. Any significant findings will be relayed to the AAIB and published in a future issue of the AAIB Bulletin.