

Grumman AA5A, G-PING, 23 June 1996

AAIB Bulletin No: 8/96 Ref: EW/G96/06/34 Category: 1.3s

Aircraft Type and Registration: Grumman AA5A, G-PING

No & Type of Engines: 1 Lycoming O-320 E2G piston engine

Year of Manufacture: 1979

Date & Time (UTC): 23 June 1996 at 0938 hrs

Location: Elstree Airport, Borehamwood, Herts

Type of Flight: Private (Training)

Persons on Board: Crew - 1 Passengers - None

Injuries: Crew - None Passengers - N/A

Nature of Damage: Both wings damaged beyond repair. Superficial exterior scratches on fuselage

Commander's Licence: Student Pilot

Commander's Age: 37 years

Commander's Flying Experience: 28 hours (of which 28 were on type)

Last 90 days - 12 hours

Last 28 days - 3 hours

Information Source: Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot and enquiries by the AAIB

After some dual instruction, the student had been detailed for solo circuit training using Runway 08. The weather was good with a light and variable surface wind. After three circuits including two go-arounds, the student reported that he called "G-PING Finals, Touch and Go" and received a reply from the air-ground communication service (A/G) operator to the effect that he could roll at his discretion. At the time, there were a total of four aircraft in the circuit, the maximum allowed by the airfield operator, and some aircraft waiting for take-off. The pilot of G-PING reported that he landed long and then quickly raised the flaps and started applying full power; as he applied power he heard the A/G operator call "G-PING roll to the Pan". The student immediately reduced power to idle and initially concentrated on holding the aircraft on the runway centre-line; by then G-PING was on the down-slope towards the end of the runway and the student commenced full braking. However, at the end of the runway, the aircraft was still too fast to negotiate the turn-off and went through the fence at the airfield perimeter. After securing the engine, the student evacuated the aircraft.

In a very honest report, the A/G operator acknowledged that he had made the call to G-PING while the aircraft was on the ground. He was aware that the pilot had called for a touch-and-go but, when he saw the landing position which he estimated as at least half way down the runway, he thought that G-PING would be unable to then make a safe rolling take-off; he was also conscious of the need to get the waiting aircraft airborne expeditiously. Thereafter, the A/G operator thought that the aircraft was increasing speed to clear the runway but quickly alerted the RFFS when he realised that he would not be able to stop before the end of the runway.

Subsequent to the accident, the surface wind was noted as 340°/05kt. The student reported that, because of his inexperience, he reacted to the A/G operator's call as an instruction; he was also influenced by the pre-flight briefing by his instructor who had said that if he wanted him back early, he would pass the message by radio. Once he had reduced power, the student did not think that he had sufficient runway to enable him to re-apply power and make a safe take-off. The student's instructor considered that there were several factors contributing to the accident. Lack of experience was relevant causing indecision resulting from a combination of the long landing and the radio call.