

## ACCIDENT

<b>Aircraft Type and Registration:</b>	Piper PA-28-161 Cherokee Warrior III, G-COVB	
<b>No &amp; Type of Engines:</b>	1 Lycoming O-320-D3G piston engine	
<b>Year of Manufacture:</b>	2005 (Serial no: 2842234)	
<b>Date &amp; Time (UTC):</b>	23 February 2015 at 1140 hrs	
<b>Location:</b>	Shotteswell Airfield, Warwickshire	
<b>Type of Flight:</b>	Private	
<b>Persons on Board:</b>	Crew - 2	Passengers - None
<b>Injuries:</b>	Crew - 1 (Serious)	Passengers - N/A
<b>Nature of Damage:</b>	Aircraft destroyed	
<b>Commander's Licence:</b>	Private Pilot's Licence	
<b>Commander's Age:</b>	78 years	
<b>Commander's Flying Experience:</b>	5,500 hours (of which 1,350 were on type) Last 90 days - 15 hours Last 28 days - 8 hours	
<b>Information Source:</b>	Aircraft Accident Report submitted by the pilot and photographs of the accident site	

## Synopsis

The aircraft was flying a practice forced landing to a grass airstrip with the intention of performing a go-around. At about 500 ft, the aircraft encountered severe turbulence in a strong crosswind. The handling pilot was unable to arrest a rapid descent and the aircraft struck the ground adjacent to the airstrip.

## History of the flight

The purpose of the flight was to conduct a Licence Proficiency Check for the renewal of a Private Pilot's Licence. On board were a Flight Examiner and a pilot under check whose licence had expired. The pilot under check acted as handling pilot throughout.

The aircraft departed Coventry Airport at 1055 hrs. Runway 23 was in use, with a surface wind from 230° at 17 kt. There was good visibility and scattered cloud at 2,000 ft. The temperature was 6°C and the dew point was 2°C.

After takeoff, the aircraft climbed to the south to an altitude of about 3,000 ft for a period of general handling, after which the handling pilot was presented with a simulated engine failure. As the aircraft descended, he identified the grass airstrip at Shotteswell Airfield, near Banbury, and declared his intention to plan an approach there. It had previously been briefed that a go-around would be flown from any practice forced landing, from not lower than 300 ft agl.

The airstrip itself was 700 m long and orientated 15/33. The handling pilot elected to use Runway 33 and flew a left hand circuit to reach a final approach position at about 500 ft. At this point, the aircraft encountered severe turbulence in the strong crosswind and the pilot was unable to prevent the aircraft descending rapidly towards the airstrip.

The aircraft's right wing touched the ground and the aircraft cartwheeled, with the nose and port wing striking the ground in turn. Photographs of the accident site showed the first ground markings about 30 m to the left of Runway 33, between the runway and trees flanking a minor road. The aircraft was tracking across the runway, so that when it came to rest it was lying inverted at the runway edge.

Both occupants remained conscious throughout the accident sequence and were able to leave the badly damaged aircraft through a gap in the structure in the right windscreen area.

### **Meteorological information**

The wind reports at Coventry Airport, 16 nm north of the accident site, showed that the wind there increased for a time after the aircraft's departure. The 1050 hrs report (the last obtained by the crew) showed a wind from 230° at 17 kt. Thirty minutes later, the wind was reported at 20 kt and at 1150 hrs (soon after the estimated time of the accident) it was 19 kt with gusts to 30 kt and with variations in direction. Although the mean wind started to reduce from mid-afternoon, the gusts were reported into early evening.

The forecast for the day, issued by the Met Office at 0802 hrs and valid between 0900 hrs and 1800 hrs, gave a surface wind of 12 kt from 230°. However, it also included a 30% probability of the wind increasing to 15 kt and gusting to 25 kt, associated with showers of rain and snow.

### **Conclusion**

The aircraft encountered adverse weather conditions while flying a practice forced landing profile. The conditions created a situation which was beyond the crew's ability to deal with effectively, resulting in a loss of control at a critical stage of the flight.