

**Aviation Safety Investigation Report  
198800137**

**Piper PA18-150 Supercub**

**12 October 1988**

Readers are advised that the Australian Transport Safety Bureau investigates for the sole purpose of enhancing transport safety. Consequently, Bureau reports are confined to matters of safety significance and may be misleading if used for any other purposes.

Investigations commenced on or before 30 June 2003, including the publication of reports as a result of those investigations, are authorised by the CEO of the Bureau in accordance with Part 2A of the Air Navigation Act 1920.

Investigations commenced after 1 July 2003, including the publication of reports as a result of those investigations, are authorised by the CEO of the Bureau in accordance with the Transport Safety Investigation Act 2003 (TSI Act). Reports released under the TSI Act are not admissible as evidence in any civil or criminal proceedings.

**NOTE: All air safety occurrences reported to the ATSB are categorised and recorded. For a detailed explanation on Category definitions please refer to the ATSB website at [www.atsb.gov.au](http://www.atsb.gov.au).**

This accident was not subject to an on scene investigation.

**Occurrence Number:** 198800137

**Occurrence Type:** Accident

**Location:**

Williamburg Station Outcamp (175km NE Carnarvon) WA

**Date:**

12 October 1988

**Time:** 1230

**Highest Injury Level:** Nil

**Injuries:**

	Fatal	Serious	Minor	None
Crew	0	0	1	1
Ground	0	0	0	-
Passenger	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>

**Aircraft Details:** Piper PA18-150 Supercub

**Registration:** VH-PYK

**Serial Number:** 18-8634

**Operation Type:** Private

**Damage Level:** Substantial

**Departure Point:** Outcamp WA

**Departure Time:** 1230

**Destination:** Williamburg Station WA

**Approved for Release:** November 16th 1988

#### **Circumstances:**

The pilot was asked to bring some mill parts out to a Station Outcamp. He decided to fly out rather than drive. After dipping the fuel tanks the pilot boarded the aircraft and flew to the Outcamp, where he off-loaded the equipment with the engine running. The pilot then lined-up along the strip and commenced the takeoff roll. The engine failed shortly after the aircraft became airborne and the pilot was forced to land ahead. During the landing roll the aircraft hit a tree. When the pilot checked the fuel tanks during his daily inspection the left- hand tank contained 9 litres of fuel and the right-hand tank contained 31 litres of fuel. Total fuel contents were adequate for the intended flights. The pilot selected the left fuel tank for start up and taxi intending to change to the right tank prior to the first takeoff. The pilot did not change the tank selection. The engine failed, shortly after liftoff, on the second flight when the contents of the left-hand fuel tank were exhausted. There was insufficient time for the pilot to take any action other than attempt a forced landing. The terrain, in the area of the landing, was unsuitable. The Aircraft Flight Manual Pre-takeoff Check List (Vital Actions) includes a check that the fuel selector is selected to the fullest tank.

#### **Significant Factors:**

It was considered that the following factors were relevant to the development of the accident

1. The pilot's attention to the operation of the aircraft was diverted by the mundane aspects of the flights. He did not complete the pre-takeoff check list on either flight.
2. It is possible that the pilot's extensive experience on the aircraft made him complacent about completing the pre-takeoff checks at a set time, prior to takeoff, and as set out in the Flight Manual.

3. The engine stopped because all the fuel in the selected fuel tank was exhausted. There was sufficient fuel on board the aircraft to complete the flight in safety.
4. The pilot's actions following the engine stoppage were correct (to concentrate on the landing, to land ahead and not to attempt a turn back) however, the terrain was unsuitable for a safe landing.