

**Aviation Safety Investigation Report  
198503530**

**Piper PA28-161 "Warrior"**

**18 August 1985**

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**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).**

**Occurrence Number:** 198503530  
**Location:** Cairns QLD  
**Date:** 18 August 1985  
**Highest Injury Level:** Nil  
**Injuries:**

**Occurrence Type:** Accident

**Time:** 1624

	Fatal	Serious	Minor	None
Crew	0	0	1	1
Ground	0	0	0	-
Passenger	0	0	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>

**Aircraft Details:** Piper PA28-161 "Warrior"  
**Registration:** VH-PZH  
**Serial Number:**  
**Operation Type:** Pleasure  
**Damage Level:** Substantial  
**Departure Point:** Cairns QLD  
**Departure Time:** 1624  
**Destination:** Cairns QLD

**Approved for Release:** 26th September, 1985

**Circumstances:**

The pilot intended to drop a flour bomb at a local cricket ground. He subsequently advised that during the run-in to drop the bomb at 400 feet agl a downdraft was encountered. Full power was rapidly applied but the engine faltered and the aircraft collided with the top of a tree at a height of about 35 feet agl. Some 40 people were gathered under this tree at the time. The impact shattered the windscreen and the cockpit was filled with debris, and a 2 metre limb remained attached to the horizontal stabiliser. The pilot was able to retain control of the aircraft and a safe landing was carried out at the destination aerodrome. No evidence was found to support the pilot's claim that the aircraft was affected by a downdraft. It was possible that the pilot was distracted by the actions required to drop the flour bomb, and did not pay sufficient attention to the area ahead of the aircraft.