

**Aviation Safety Investigation Report
198801399**

Piper PA28-140

8 October 1988

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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.

Occurrence Number: 198801399

Occurrence Type: Accident

Location: 100 metres NNW of Romsey Airstrip VIC

Date: 8 October 1988

Time: 1630

Highest Injury Level: Nil

Injuries:

	Fatal	Serious	Minor	None
Crew	0	0	1	1
Ground	0	0	0	-
Passenger	0	0	0	2
Total	0	0	0	3

Aircraft Details: Piper PA28-140

Registration: VH-WXB

Serial Number: 28-7425069

Operation Type: Private

Damage Level: Substantial

Departure Point: Ballarat VIC

Departure Time: 1545

Destination: Romsey VIC

Approved for Release: 9th October 1989

Circumstances:

This was to be the first trip away for the pilot since having the area restriction lifted from his Private Pilot Licence. He obtained an area weather forecast which included predicted winds of 35 knots, scattered stratus cloud, base 1000/2500 in showers, visibility reduced to six kilometres in showers, with turbulence moderate and occasionally severe. A Visual Flight Rules plan was submitted for a flight from Romsey to Ararat and return. The aircraft later departed and the flight to Ararat was completed satisfactorily. After several hours on the ground the pilot departed on the return leg, deciding that he would call at Ballarat for fuel. Melbourne Flight Service passed him details of the amended area forecast which included details similar to the forecast earlier received and included advice that there would be widespread moderate turbulence and occasional severe turbulence. The Ballarat Terminal Area Forecast was also passed and this gave a surface wind from 290 degrees at 15-35 knots. After landing at Ballarat and obtaining fuel the pilot departed for Romsey. There was moderate turbulence enroute and this became noticeably worse near Mt Macedon and continued for the remainder of the flight. On overflying the airfield the pilot estimated the wind was a south-westerly to westerly and the strength varied from 20-30 knots. He elected to approach for strip 21 but on the landing flare found the crosswind was too strong and made a go-around. The pilot then decided to make an approach for strip 33, intending that if the crosswind was too strong he would divert to Melton. Again on the landing flare the crosswind was too strong and he applied full throttle for a go-around. It appeared to the pilot that the aircraft was not climbing as well as on the first go around; he reduced the flap setting from two stages to one stage and lowered the nose to try and gain airspeed. The aircraft descended and drifted well right of the strip, striking a small tree abeam of the upwind end of the strip. The right wing was dislodged by the tree impact, the aircraft then fell to the ground. Inspection of the aircraft did not reveal any evidence of pre-existing defects which might have contributed to the accident. The engine had continued operating up to the time of the accident. An analysis of weather data was made by the Bureau of Meteorology. This indicated a surface wind from 290 degrees

at 15-20 knots with possible gusts to 40 knots. Also, moderate/severe turbulence, windshear, possible downdrafts and a high probability of rotor turbulence associated with the strong low level westerly flow over Mt Macedon to the west of the airstrip. It was not possible to state with certainty the reason for the poor climb performance on the second go-around but the most likely explanation was an encounter with severe weather conditions and windshear.

Significant Factors:

The following factors were considered relevant to the development of the accident

1. The pilot was inexperienced.
2. Unfavourable weather conditions existed in the Romsey area, and it is probable that the aircraft encountered low level windshear.