

**Aviation Safety Investigation Report  
198901565**

**Piper PA28-140**

**26 December 1989**

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.

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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).**

This accident was not formally investigated by the Bureau.

**Occurrence Number:** 198901565
 **Occurrence Type:** Accident

**Location:** 5 km NE of Bendigo VIC
 **Time:** 2020

**Date:** 26 December 1989

**Highest Injury Level:** Nil

**Injuries:**

	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 PA28-140

**Registration:** VH-WRH

**Serial Number:** 28-2248

**Operation Type:** Private

**Damage Level:** Substantial

**Departure Point:** Narrandera NSW

**Departure Time:** 1820

**Destination:** Bendigo VIC

**Approved for Release:** 18th July 1990

**Circumstances:**

The pilot was flying at 1500 feet above ground level with the fuel selector set for the right fuel tank when the engine stopped. The right fuel gauge was reading near empty but the reading was fluctuating due to gusty inflight weather conditions. The left tank had already been run dry in an effort to achieve maximum endurance. Based on past fuel burn off rates and elapse time since the last refuel, the pilot believed that his 45 minute fixed reserve was still available despite the low fuel gauge reading. When the engine stopped the pilot selected the boost pump on. The engine restarted for a few seconds before stopping again. He turned the aircraft to the most suitable paddocks where he became committed to a downwind forced landing. During the landing roll the right flap was damaged by a steel fence post. After the landing the pilot saw fuel stains on the left wing near the fuel cap. Fuel had vented overboard in flight past a faulty fuel cap seal.