



Ref: 7500

SOUTH AFRICAN CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY**ACCIDENT REPORT – EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Aircraft Registration	ZS-MHG	Date of Accident	7 May 2002	Time of Accident	1710Z
Type of Aircraft	PIPER PA 34-200T		Type of Operation	Commercial	
Pilot-in-command License Type	Commercial	Age	25	License Valid	Yes
Pilot-in-command Flying Experience	Total Flying Hours	1 757.6		Hours on Type	± 120.0
Last point of departure	Pietersburg (Gateway International)				
Next point of intended landing	Louis Trichardt Aerodrome				

Location of the accident site with reference to easily defined geographical points (GPS readings if possible)

Louis Trichardt Aerodrome, Runway 28

Meteorological Information	Fine				
Number of people on board	1 + 2	No. of people injured	None	No. of people killed	None

Synopsis

The pilot departed Wonderboom aerodrome on a flight to a private aerodrome (Tununga) in Northern Botswana, where he had to collect two passengers. The runway surface as described by the pilot was "rough grass". He decided that the take-off should be as short as possible to keep the vibration strain on the aircraft airframe as little as possible.

Runway 29 was elected for take-off (into wind). "I held the nose up and did a nose high take-off roll to spare the nose gear. Close to lift-off I heard a loud impact sound from the right main gear, which might have been a rock. I did not see anything standing out on the roll. The gear cycled normally after take-off.

The aircraft was landed at Francistown where they cleared customs. While on the ground, the pilot inspected the landing gear but could not observe any obvious damage. The flight was continued and the aircraft was landed at Gateway International Airport (Pietersburg) where they again cleared customs. From there they continued with the flight with the next intended landing being at Louis Trichardt (FALO).

Prior to landing at Louis Trichardt, all cockpit indications were normal (indicating 3 greens). After touch down the landing roll proceeded as if nothing was wrong. "When I started to apply brakes the aircraft started to react as if it had a flat right-hand tyre. I immediately released the brakes and kept the aircraft under control and shut down the engines. I did this in order to stop the aircraft to assess the problem".

Once the pilot had disembarked from the aircraft he realised that it would not be possible to vacate the runway. A message was broadcast on the VHF frequency 124.80 and 121.20 indicating the problem. Johannesburg Briefing was also informed of the situation.

Probable Cause

It would appear that the aircraft was being utilised for an extended period, landing and taking off from rough, unsuitable runways and aerodromes resulting in excessive strain on the landing gear including the forward and aft trunnion fitting assemblies, resulting in the subsequent failure of both these components.