

Follow-up Action on Occurrence Report

ACCIDENT TO PIPER PA31, G-ILEA, WEST OF BARBADOS, ON 18 MAY 2003
(AIRCRAFT DISAPPEARED ON TRANSIT FLIGHT)

CAA FACTOR NUMBER : F42/2003
FACTOR PUBLICATION DATE : 10 December 2003
OPERATOR : Private
CAA OCCURRENCE NUMBER : 2003/03013
AAIB REPORT : Bulletin 11/2003

SYNOPSIS

(From AAIB Report)

The aircraft was on a flight from Canouan, a small island in the St Vincent group, to Barbados. Shortly after entering Barbados airspace, radar recordings show the aircraft deviated to the south of a direct easterly track to Barbados and descended from cruise flight level (FL) 55 to an altitude of 2,300 feet. The aircraft levelled at 2,300 feet and resumed an easterly track for about six minutes before once again deviating to the south and commencing a further descent. About 16 minutes after the aircraft's initial descent from FL55, the pilots of a commercial aircraft flying from Grenada to Barbados relayed a MAYDAY call from G-ILEA to Barbados Arrivals reporting that the pilot "had lost one engine; it appeared he was losing fuel and he doubted that he would be able to make it to Barbados". Some three and a half minutes after the initial MAYDAY call, the pilot of the commercial aircraft relayed a further message stating that the pilot intended to ditch. The final radar return for the aircraft showed it at an altitude of 600 feet about 55 miles on the 259° radial from Barbados Airport. Despite an extensive search and rescue operation, no trace of the aircraft or its two occupants was found. A reconciliation of fuel receipts and flight times shows that, at best, the aircraft would have been short of fuel for the flight, and at worst could have run out of fuel.

FOLLOW UP ACTION

The one Safety Recommendation, made by the AAIB following their investigation, is reproduced below, together with the CAA's response.

Recommendation 2003-77

It is recommended that New Piper Aircraft Ltd develop advice on ditching and ditching checklists for inclusion in the Aircraft Flight Manuals and Pilot Operating Handbooks of the PA-31 and other Piper types.

CAA Response

This Recommendation is not addressed to the CAA.

CAA Status - Closed