



# Aviation Investigation Final Report

<b>Location:</b>	Fairbanks, Alaska	<b>Accident Number:</b>	ANC02LA022
<b>Date &amp; Time:</b>	March 13, 2002, 15:53 Local	<b>Registration:</b>	N3527U
<b>Aircraft:</b>	Piper PA-31-350	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Substantial
<b>Defining Event:</b>		<b>Injuries:</b>	9 None
<b>Flight Conducted Under:</b>	Part 135: Air taxi & commuter - Scheduled		

## Analysis

Upon entering the pattern, the pilot was given instructions by the tower controllers he had not anticipated. In complying with the instructions, he altered his normal landing procedures, and failed to complete his before landing checklist. He subsequently landed the airplane with the landing gear retracted. The airplane sustained substantial damage to fuselage stringers and skin.

## Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The pilot's failure to complete his prelanding checklist, and a subsequent inadvertent wheels up landing.

## Findings

Occurrence #1: WHEELS UP LANDING  
Phase of Operation: LANDING - FLARE/TOUCHDOWN

### Findings

1. (C) WHEELS UP LANDING - INADVERTENT - PILOT IN COMMAND
2. (C) CHECKLIST - NOT COMPLIED WITH - PILOT IN COMMAND

## Factual Information

On March 13, 2002, about 1553 Alaska standard time, a Piper PA-31-350 airplane, N3527U, sustained substantial damage during an inadvertent wheels-up landing, at the Fairbanks International Airport, Fairbanks, Alaska. The airplane was being operated as a visual flight rules (VFR) scheduled passenger flight under Title 14, CFR Part 135, when the accident occurred. The airplane was operated by Warbelow Air Ventures, Inc., of Fairbanks, as Flight 605. The airline transport pilot and the eight passengers were not injured. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed, and the winds were light and variable at the time of the accident. A company VFR flight plan was active. The flight originated at the Fort Yukon Airport, Fort Yukon, Alaska, about 1503.

During a telephone conversation with the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) investigator-in-charge (IIC), on March 14, the pilot said as he entered the pattern, he was told by the tower to cross over and enter right traffic for runway 1. The tower then told him he would have to extend downwind because of traffic. The pilot said he made a conscious decision not to put the landing gear down at the usual point because of the request to extend his pattern. He said as he started to extend his pattern, the tower asked him to expedite a base turn, and "keep it tight." The pilot said on the base leg, he again failed to complete his checklist. He said on the final leg of his approach, the airplane behind him said they were too close, and they were going to go around. In the confusion, he said he never completed his before landing checklist, and landed the airplane with the landing gear retracted. The pilot said that fatigue added to his confusion, which lead to the accident.

During a telephone conversation with the IIC on March 14, the director of maintenance for the operator said the forward third of the longitudinal stringers and several bulkheads of the fuselage will have to be replaced, due to damage incurred during the accident. He noted that once the airplane was raised off of the runway, the landing gear functioned normally, and the three green landing gear warning lights illuminated.

In a letter to the NTSB dated March 14, the pilot reiterated most of his earlier statements. He added that the landing gear warning horn did not activate because of the unusually high power setting used to, "keep it tight," as requested by the tower. He expounded on his earlier statement that fatigue added to his confusion, saying that he had not slept well the night before, and that annual training demands had added to his workload.

## Pilot Information

<b>Certificate:</b>	Airline transport; Commercial; Flight instructor	<b>Age:</b>	52, Male
<b>Airplane Rating(s):</b>	Single-engine land; Multi-engine land	<b>Seat Occupied:</b>	Left
<b>Other Aircraft Rating(s):</b>	None	<b>Restraint Used:</b>	
<b>Instrument Rating(s):</b>	Airplane	<b>Second Pilot Present:</b>	No
<b>Instructor Rating(s):</b>	Airplane multi-engine; Airplane single-engine; Instrument airplane	<b>Toxicology Performed:</b>	No
<b>Medical Certification:</b>	Class 1 Valid Medical--w/ waivers/lim	<b>Last FAA Medical Exam:</b>	June 15, 2000
<b>Occupational Pilot:</b>	Yes	<b>Last Flight Review or Equivalent:</b>	November 7, 2001
<b>Flight Time:</b>	5330 hours (Total, all aircraft), 1349 hours (Total, this make and model), 5152 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 352 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 115 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 4 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

## Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

<b>Aircraft Make:</b>	Piper	<b>Registration:</b>	N3527U
<b>Model/Series:</b>	PA-31-350	<b>Aircraft Category:</b>	Airplane
<b>Year of Manufacture:</b>		<b>Amateur Built:</b>	
<b>Airworthiness Certificate:</b>	Normal	<b>Serial Number:</b>	317952161
<b>Landing Gear Type:</b>	Retractable - Tricycle	<b>Seats:</b>	9
<b>Date/Type of Last Inspection:</b>	March 10, 2002 AAIP	<b>Certified Max Gross Wt.:</b>	7368 lbs
<b>Time Since Last Inspection:</b>	10.4 Hrs	<b>Engines:</b>	2 Reciprocating
<b>Airframe Total Time:</b>	20891.5 Hrs as of last inspection	<b>Engine Manufacturer:</b>	Lycoming
<b>ELT:</b>	Installed, not activated	<b>Engine Model/Series:</b>	TIO-540-J2BB
<b>Registered Owner:</b>	Warbelow Air Ventures, Inc.	<b>Rated Power:</b>	350 Horsepower
<b>Operator:</b>		<b>Operating Certificate(s) Held:</b>	Commuter air carrier (135), On-demand air taxi (135)
<b>Operator Does Business As:</b>	Warbelow Air Ventures, Inc.	<b>Operator Designator Code:</b>	WVVA

## Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

<b>Conditions at Accident Site:</b>	Visual (VMC)	<b>Condition of Light:</b>	Day
<b>Observation Facility, Elevation:</b>	PAFA,434 ft msl	<b>Distance from Accident Site:</b>	0 Nautical Miles
<b>Observation Time:</b>	15:53 Local	<b>Direction from Accident Site:</b>	
<b>Lowest Cloud Condition:</b>	Clear	<b>Visibility</b>	10 miles
<b>Lowest Ceiling:</b>	None	<b>Visibility (RVR):</b>	
<b>Wind Speed/Gusts:</b>	/ None	<b>Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:</b>	/
<b>Wind Direction:</b>	100°	<b>Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:</b>	/
<b>Altimeter Setting:</b>	30.12 inches Hg	<b>Temperature/Dew Point:</b>	-6°C / -21°C
<b>Precipitation and Obscuration:</b>	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
<b>Departure Point:</b>	Fort Yukon, AK (PFYU)	<b>Type of Flight Plan Filed:</b>	Company VFR
<b>Destination:</b>	Fairbanks, AK (PAFA)	<b>Type of Clearance:</b>	VFR
<b>Departure Time:</b>	13:01 Local	<b>Type of Airspace:</b>	Class D

## Airport Information

<b>Airport:</b>	Fairbanks International FAI	<b>Runway Surface Type:</b>	Asphalt
<b>Airport Elevation:</b>	434 ft msl	<b>Runway Surface Condition:</b>	Dry;Rubber deposits
<b>Runway Used:</b>	01L	<b>IFR Approach:</b>	None
<b>Runway Length/Width:</b>	11800 ft / 150 ft	<b>VFR Approach/Landing:</b>	Traffic pattern

## Wreckage and Impact Information

<b>Crew Injuries:</b>	1 None	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Substantial
<b>Passenger Injuries:</b>	8 None	<b>Aircraft Fire:</b>	None
<b>Ground Injuries:</b>	N/A	<b>Aircraft Explosion:</b>	None
<b>Total Injuries:</b>	9 None	<b>Latitude, Longitude:</b>	64.813613,-147.859725

## Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Lewis, Lawrence
Additional Participating Persons:	Jim G Helberg; Fairbanks FSDO; Fairbanks, AK
Original Publish Date:	June 18, 2002
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	<a href="#">Class</a>
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	<a href="https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=54346">https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=54346</a>

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) is an independent federal agency charged by Congress with investigating every civil aviation accident in the United States and significant events in other modes of transportation—railroad, transit, highway, marine, pipeline, and commercial space. We determine the probable causes of the accidents and events we investigate, and issue safety recommendations aimed at preventing future occurrences. In addition, we conduct transportation safety research studies and offer information and other assistance to family members and survivors for each accident or event we investigate. We also serve as the appellate authority for enforcement actions involving aviation and mariner certificates issued by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and US Coast Guard, and we adjudicate appeals of civil penalty actions taken by the FAA.

The NTSB does not assign fault or blame for an accident or incident; rather, as specified by NTSB regulation, “accident/incident investigations are fact-finding proceedings with no formal issues and no adverse parties ... and are not conducted for the purpose of determining the rights or liabilities of any person” (Title 49 *Code of Federal Regulations* section 831.4). Assignment of fault or legal liability is not relevant to the NTSB’s statutory mission to improve transportation safety by investigating accidents and incidents and issuing safety recommendations. In addition, statutory language prohibits the admission into evidence or use of any part of an NTSB report related to an accident in a civil action for damages resulting from a matter mentioned in the report (Title 49 *United States Code* section 1154(b)). A factual report that may be admissible under 49 *United States Code* section 1154(b) is available [here](#).