

# Weekender

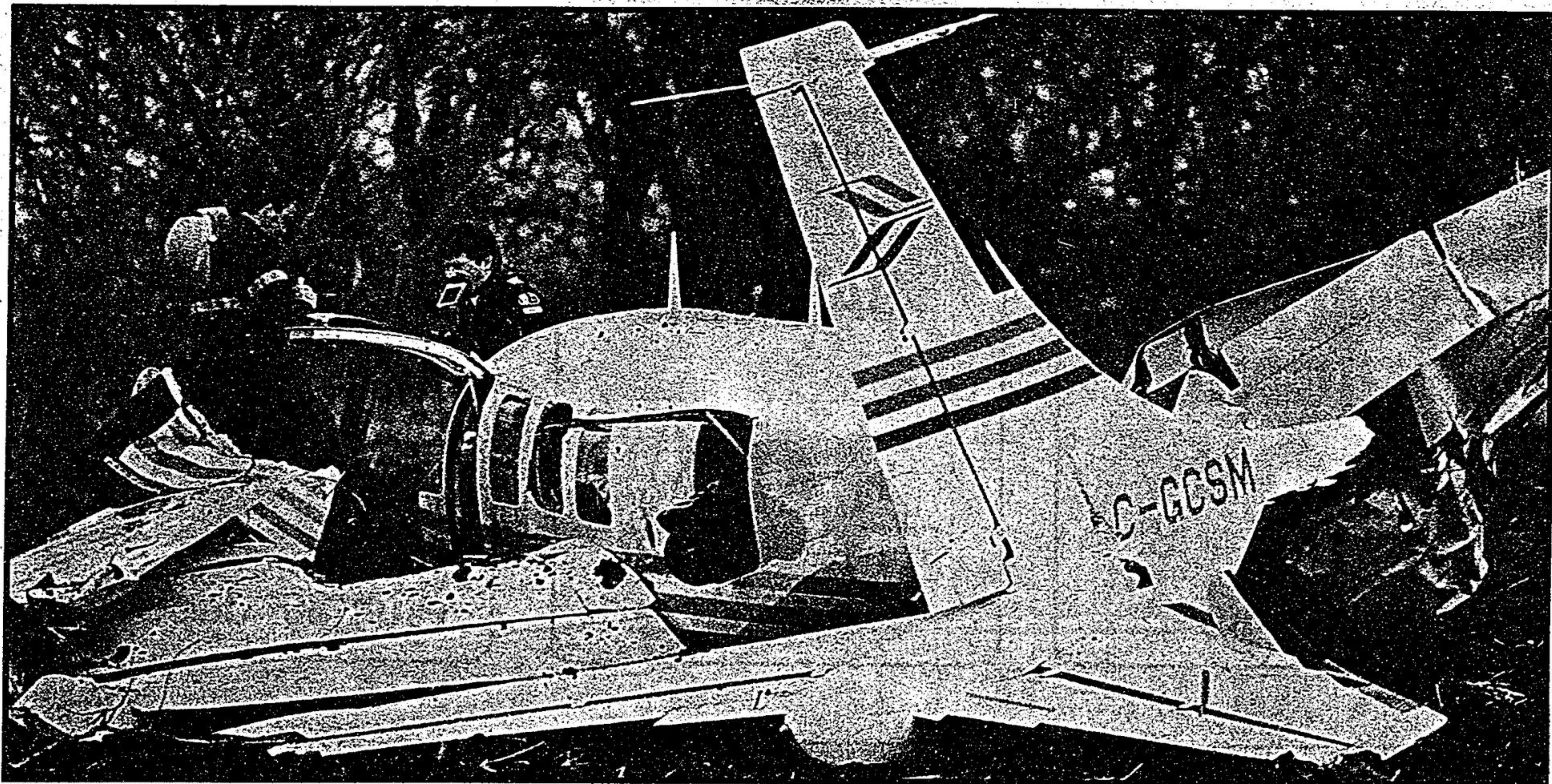
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Investigators probe the wreck of a twin-engine, six-passenger Piper Aerostar aircraft after it crashed in an open field minutes after take-off from Buttonville Air-

port Thursday morning. Pilot Robert Allan, 25, of Pickering died after being transported to Sunnybrook Medical Centre by air ambulance. His quick thinking is cre-

ditied for saving the others aboard the plane. Four passengers, including one from Unionville and another from Stouffville, were injured in the crash.

— Sjoerd Witteveen

## Investigation continues

# Pilot dies after crash

By GREG COATES  
Staff Reporter

The cause of Thursday's plane crash in Buttonville which killed a 25-year-old Pickering pilot and injured four others — including residents of Unionville and Stouffville — remains a mystery to investigators.

The twin-engine, six-passenger Piper Aerostar crashed about 7:30 a.m. in an open field adjacent to George Knudson's Golf Centre shortly after take-off from Buttonville Airport.

Pilot Robert Allan was rushed by air ambulance to Sunnybrook Medical Centre, where he later died. It's reported Mr.

Allan was thrown forward and struck his head on the aircraft's instrument panel upon impact.

Passengers John Simpall, 38, of Unionville, William Guest, 39, of Stouffville, and John Campbell, 38, of Toronto, were taken to York Central Hospital with various minor injuries.

A fourth passenger, Allan Shido, 40, of Brampton, was transferred to Toronto General Hospital where he remains in serious condition after exploratory surgery.

### Broken ankle

Mr. Simpall, Mr. Guest and Mr. Campbell are listed in stable condition with back and

abdominal injuries. Mr. Guest also suffered a broken ankle in the crash.

The four men are long-time friends and were going on a golf vacation in Charlotte, North Carolina. The plane is owned by Gilbert Storey C. Machinery Ltd. of Markham.

York Regional Police said the accident took place seconds after the plane left the runway. A reliable source with a sound aviation background said the aircraft was late getting into the air and barely cleared hydro wires at the end of the runway.

"It took the whole runway to get off the ground which is very unusual," said the source. He

added the pilot may have attempted a wing stall to keep the plane from crashing nose first.

### Pilot credited

The plane tore through trees and landed in a muddy, open field. Mr. Allan, a well-qualified pilot with more than 2,500 flying hours, is credited with saving the lives of his passengers by making an emergency landing in the field.

Pieces of the plane's tail and wings were scattered across the crash site just south of a Woodbine Ave. farmhouse. Among the wreckage were golf bags and luggage.

Emergency crews from Buttonville Airport, Markham Fire Department, York Regional Police and York Region's ambulance services attended the scene.

Deputy Fire Chief Bob Reid said the pilot was trapped in the wreckage and that two of the passengers had apparently crawled out of the plane on their own. Mr. Reid credited emergency personnel with doing an excellent job.

"Everything went very smoothly," he said. "I thought it worked out very well."

The accident is being investigated by the Canadian Aviation Safety Board.

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