



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Final Report

Location:	ORINDA, CA	Accident Number:	LAX88FA148
Date & Time:	04/03/1988, 1906 PDT	Registration:	N6ET
Aircraft:	PIPER PA-31-325	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Defining Event:		Injuries:	5 Fatal
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

Analysis

BEFORE THE ACDNT, WITNESSES OBSERVED THE ACFT CIRCLING IN A VALLEY BENEATH A LOW CLOUD LAYER & BELOW THE SURROUNDING HILLTOPS. THEY ESTIMATED THE CEILING WAS 400' OBSCURED. TWO WITNESSES SAID THE ACFT ENTERED CLOUDS BEFORE IT CRASHED. A 3RD WITNESS, WHO WAS A PLT, SAID THE ACFT WAS AT A VERY LOW ALT WHEN IT APCHD RISING/MOUNTAINOUS TERRAIN; HE SAID THE ACFT THEN ENTERED A STEEP CLIMBING TURN & STALLED AFTER MAKING 2 COMPLETE TURNS. IMPACT OCCURRED IN A NOSE LOW, LEFT WING DOWN ATTITUDE. NO PREIMPACT MECHANICAL PROBLEM WAS FOUND. THE FAA HAD ISSUED THE PLT A SPECIAL 3RD CLASS MED CERT AFTER HE HAD QUINTUPLE HEART BYPASS SURGERY. HE WAS RPRTD TO HAVE GOTTEN 'QUITE ANGRY' BEFORE THE FLT, WHEN 2 PAXS WERE LATE. A PATHOLOGIST BELIEVED THE PLT'S DEATH MAY HAVE BEEN DUE TO ARTERIOSCLEROTIC HEART DISEASE; HOWEVER, THIS WAS NOT VERIFIED. THE PLT DID NOT HAVE AN INSTRUMENT RATING & NO RECORD OF A PREFLT WX BRIEFING WAS FOUND.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be:

Findings

Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT ENCOUNTER WITH WEATHER

Phase of Operation: CRUISE

Findings

1. (F) PREFLIGHT PLANNING/PREPARATION - INADEQUATE - PILOT IN COMMAND
2. (F) TERRAIN CONDITION - MOUNTAINOUS/HILLY
3. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - LOW CEILING
4. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - FOG
5. (F) VFR FLIGHT INTO IMC - CONTINUED - PILOT IN COMMAND

Occurrence #2: LOSS OF CONTROL - IN FLIGHT

Phase of Operation: MANEUVERING

Findings

6. MANEUVER - INITIATED
7. (C) AIRSPEED - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND
8. (C) STALL - INADVERTENT - PILOT IN COMMAND

Occurrence #3: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER

Phase of Operation: DESCENT - UNCONTROLLED

Factual Information

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	66, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Multi-engine Land; Single-engine Land	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	Seatbelt, Shoulder harness
Instrument Rating(s):	None	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	Yes
Medical Certification:	Class 3 Valid Medical--w/ waivers/lim.	Last FAA Medical Exam:	12/03/1987
Occupational Pilot:		Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	6500 hours (Total, all aircraft), 2 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	PIPER	Registration:	N6ET
Model/Series:	PA-31-325 PA-31-325	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	No
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	31-7612012
Landing Gear Type:	Retractable - Tricycle	Seats:	8
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	12/18/1987, Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	6500 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	2 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:		Engine Manufacturer:	LYCOMING
ELT:	Installed, not activated	Engine Model/Series:	TIO-540-F2BD
Registered Owner:	TANNER CONSTRUCTION, INC.	Rated Power:	325 hp
Operator:	TANNER CONSTRUCTION, INC.	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Instrument Conditions	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	, 0 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	0 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	0000	Direction from Accident Site:	0°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Unknown / 0 ft agl	Visibility	0 Miles
Lowest Ceiling:	Obscured / 400 ft agl	Visibility (RVR):	0 ft
Wind Speed/Gusts:	Calm /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:		Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:		Temperature/Dew Point:	
Precipitation and Obscuration:			
Departure Point:	REDDING, CA (RDD)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	SAN JOSE, CA (SJC)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	1800 PDT	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Fatal	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Passenger Injuries:	4 Fatal	Aircraft Fire:	On-Ground
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	5 Fatal	Latitude, Longitude:	

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	A. D LLORENTE	Report Date:	12/10/1990
Additional Participating Persons:	MICHAEL GARRETT; OAKLAND, CA ROBERT BOOB; VERO BEACH, FL		
Publish Date:			
Investigation Docket:	NTSB accident and incident dockets serve as permanent archival information for the NTSB's investigations. Dockets released prior to June 1, 2009 are publicly available from the NTSB's Record Management Division at pubinq@ntsb.gov , or at 800-877-6799. Dockets released after this date are available at http://dms.nts.gov/pubdms/ .		

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The Independent Safety Board Act, as codified at 49 U.S.C. Section 1154(b), precludes the admission into evidence or use of any part of an NTSB report related to an incident or accident in a civil action for damages resulting from a matter mentioned in the report. A factual report that may be admissible under 49 U.S.C. § 1154(b) is available [here](#).