



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Final Report

Location:	MUNFORD, AL	Accident Number:	ATL91FA052
Date & Time:	02/07/1991, 0830 CST	Registration:	N27818
Aircraft:	PIPER PA-31-350	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Defining Event:		Injuries:	4 Fatal
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 135: Air Taxi & Commuter - Non-scheduled		

Analysis

DURING AN UPDATED 0528 EST WX BRIEFING, THE PILOT WAS ADVISED OF FLIGHT PRECAUTIONS FOR IFR WEATHER CONDITIONS IN THE GEORGIA AND ALABAMA AREAS. AT 0841 EST HE DEPARTED MACON, GA ON AN IFR FLIGHT PLAN TO ANNISTON, AL. AT 0821 CST, APRX 22 MI SE FROM THE ANNISTON ARPT, THE PILOT CONTACTED ATLANTA CENTER AND CANCELLED HIS IFR FLIGHT PLAN. HE WAS ADVISED THAT THE MINIMUM SAFE ALTITUDE IN HIS AREA WAS 2,900 FT MSL. TWO MINUTES LATER HE CONTACTED ANNISTON RADIO AND REQUESTED LOCAL WX CONDITIONS. HE WAS GIVEN THE LATEST REPORTED (0756 CST) WX AS CEILING 1,500 BROKEN, 3,100 OVERCAST, 5 MI WITH FOG. THE ANNISTON AIRPORT FIELD ELEVATION IS 526 FT. THE AIRCRAFT SUBSEQUENTLY IMPACTED A MOUNTAIN TOP 10 MI SOUTH OF THE AIRPORT AT AN ELEVATION OF APRX 2,300 FT. THE 0850 CST ANNISTON WX WAS 800 FT OVERCAST, 4 MI IN FOG.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be:
THE PILOT ATTEMPTING VISUAL FLIGHT IN INSTRUMENT METEOROLOGICAL CONDITIONS BELOW THE MINIMUM SAFE ALTITUDE FOR TERRAIN CLEARANCE. CONTRIBUTING FACTORS WERE THE LOW CEILING AND MOUNTAINOUS TERRAIN.

Findings

Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER
Phase of Operation: CRUISE - NORMAL

Findings

1. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - LOW CEILING
2. (C) VFR FLIGHT INTO IMC - ATTEMPTED - PILOT IN COMMAND
3. (F) TERRAIN CONDITION - MOUNTAINOUS/HILLY
4. (C) PROPER ALTITUDE - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND

Factual Information

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial	Age:	24, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Multi-engine Land; Single-engine Land	Seat Occupied:	Unknown
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):		Toxicology Performed:	Yes
Medical Certification:	Class 1 Valid Medical--no waivers/lim.	Last FAA Medical Exam:	12/11/1990
Occupational Pilot:		Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	3000 hours (Total, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	PIPER	Registration:	N27818
Model/Series:	PA-31-350 PA-31-350	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	No
Airworthiness Certificate:		Serial Number:	31-7952001
Landing Gear Type:	Retractable - Tricycle	Seats:	9
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	Unknown	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	7000 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	0 Hours	Engines:	2 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:		Engine Manufacturer:	LYCOMING
ELT:		Engine Model/Series:	TIO-540-J2BD
Registered Owner:	MACON HORIZONS, INC	Rated Power:	310 hp
Operator:	MACON HORIZONS, INC	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	On-demand Air Taxi (135)

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Instrument Conditions	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	ANB, 611 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	18 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	0850 CST	Direction from Accident Site:	350°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Unknown / 0 ft agl	Visibility	4 Miles
Lowest Ceiling:	Overcast / 800 ft agl	Visibility (RVR):	0 ft
Wind Speed/Gusts:	6 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	240°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:		Temperature/Dew Point:	12° C / 11° C
Precipitation and Obscuration:			
Departure Point:	MACON, GA (MCN)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	ANNISTON, AL (ANB)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	0841 EST	Type of Airspace:	

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Fatal	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Passenger Injuries:	3 Fatal	Aircraft Fire:	On-Ground
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	4 Fatal	Latitude, Longitude:	

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	PHILLIP POWELL	Report Date:	07/17/1992
Additional Participating Persons:	RICK MESSER; BIRMINGHAM, AL ROBERT BOOB; VERO BEACH, FL JAMES STABLEY; WILLIAMSPORT, PA		
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](#).