



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Final Report

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| Location: | KATHLEEN, GA | Accident Number: | ATL91FA161 |
| Date & Time: | 08/16/1991, 0051 EDT | Registration: | N5855M |
| Aircraft: | CESSNA 402B | Aircraft Damage: | Destroyed |
| Defining Event: | | Injuries: | 3 Fatal |
| Flight Conducted Under: | Part 91: General Aviation - Personal | | |

Analysis

THE SINGLE ENGINE RATED PILOT AND 2 PASSENGERS WERE RETURNING FROM FLORIDA AFTER PICKING UP A NEWLY ACQUIRED CESSNA 402. THE PILOT CALLED MACON FSS FOR FUEL AVAILABILITY, AND BEGAN A NIGHT, VFR DESCENT. AT ABOUT 5300 FEET MSL, THE AIRPLANE BEGAN RAPID ALTITUDE EXCURSIONS, WHILE IN A TIGHT, RIGHT HAND TURN. DURING THIS TIME, IT DESCENDED 2600 FEET IN 37 SEC, THEN CLIMBED 1200 FEET IN 12 SEC. SUBSEQUENTLY, THE AIRPLANE IMPACTED GRADUALLY RISING TERRAIN AT HIGH SPEED. THE ENGINES WERE BURIED, AND ALL PROP BLADES SHOWED EVIDENCE OF POWER AT IMPACT. WEATHER IN THE AREA WAS REPORTED TO BE: SKY PARTIALLY OBSCURED WITH FOG. AN INVESTIGATION REVEALED THAT THE PILOT WAS NOT MULTI-ENGINE RATED. A PILOT FOR THE SELLER FLEW WITH THE ACCIDENT PILOT A FEW HRS PRIOR TO THE CRASH; HE REPORTED THAT THE ACCIDENT PILOT HAD DIFFICULTY FLYING THE AIRPLANE. HE RECOMMENDED THAT THE ACCIDENT PILOT GET ADDITIONAL TRAINING PRIOR TO LEAVING FLORIDA, BUT THE ACCIDENT PILOT REFUSED.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: THE PILOT'S FAILURE TO MAINTAIN AIRCRAFT CONTROL WHILE DESCENDING AT NIGHT. FACTORS RELATED TO THE ACCIDENT WERE: DARKNESS, FOG, THE PILOT'S LACK OF QUALIFICATION IN MULTI-ENGINE AIRCRAFT, HIS LACK OF EXPERIENCE IN THIS TYPE OF AIRCRAFT, HIS OVERCONFIDENCE IN HIS PERSONAL ABILITY, AND SPATIAL DISORIENTATION OF THE PILOT.

Findings

Occurrence #1: LOSS OF CONTROL - IN FLIGHT

Phase of Operation: DESCENT - NORMAL

Findings

1. PROCEDURES/DIRECTIVES - NOT FOLLOWED - PILOT IN COMMAND
2. (F) QUALIFICATION - PILOT IN COMMAND
3. (F) LIGHT CONDITION - NIGHT
4. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - FOG
5. (C) AIRCRAFT CONTROL - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND
6. (F) LACK OF TOTAL EXPERIENCE IN TYPE OF AIRCRAFT - PILOT IN COMMAND
7. (F) OVERCONFIDENCE IN PERSONAL ABILITY - PILOT IN COMMAND
8. (F) SPATIAL DISORIENTATION - PILOT IN COMMAND

Occurrence #2: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER

Phase of Operation: DESCENT - UNCONTROLLED

Factual Information

Pilot Information

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|----------------------------------|---|--|------------|
| Certificate: | Private | Age: | 36, Male |
| Airplane Rating(s): | Single-engine Land | Seat Occupied: | Unknown |
| Other Aircraft Rating(s): | None | Restraint Used: | |
| Instrument Rating(s): | Airplane | Second Pilot Present: | Yes |
| Instructor Rating(s): | None | Toxicology Performed: | Yes |
| Medical Certification: | Class 3 Valid Medical--w/ waivers/lim. | Last FAA Medical Exam: | 12/07/1990 |
| Occupational Pilot: | | Last Flight Review or Equivalent: | |
| Flight Time: | 521 hours (Total, all aircraft), 4 hours (Total, this make and model), 395 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft) | | |

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

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|--------------------------------------|------------------------|---|-----------------|
| Aircraft Make: | CESSNA | Registration: | N5855M |
| Model/Series: | 402B 402B | Aircraft Category: | Airplane |
| Year of Manufacture: | | Amateur Built: | No |
| Airworthiness Certificate: | | Serial Number: | 402B0360 |
| Landing Gear Type: | Retractable - Tricycle | Seats: | 8 |
| Date/Type of Last Inspection: | 08/09/1991, Annual | Certified Max Gross Wt.: | 6300 lbs |
| Time Since Last Inspection: | | Engines: | 2 Reciprocating |
| Airframe Total Time: | 4348 Hours | Engine Manufacturer: | CONTINENTAL |
| ELT: | | Engine Model/Series: | TSIO-520-E |
| Registered Owner: | HMIEL, J. PHILIP | Rated Power: | 300 hp |
| Operator: | HMIEL, GORDON D. | Operating Certificate(s) Held: | None |

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

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|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Conditions at Accident Site: | Instrument Conditions | Condition of Light: | Night/Dark |
| Observation Facility, Elevation: | WRB, 295 ft msl | Distance from Accident Site: | 11 Nautical Miles |
| Observation Time: | 0055 EDT | Direction from Accident Site: | 355° |
| Lowest Cloud Condition: | Partial Obscuration / 0 ft agl | Visibility | 1 Miles |
| Lowest Ceiling: | Broken / 25000 ft agl | Visibility (RVR): | 0 ft |
| Wind Speed/Gusts: | Calm / | Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual: | / |
| Wind Direction: | | Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual: | / |
| Altimeter Setting: | 30 inches Hg | Temperature/Dew Point: | 22° C / 21° C |
| Precipitation and Obscuration: | | | |
| Departure Point: | LIVE OAK, FL (24J) | Type of Flight Plan Filed: | None |
| Destination: | HICKORY, NC (HKY) | Type of Clearance: | |
| Departure Time: | 0006 EDT | Type of Airspace: | |

Wreckage and Impact Information

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|---------------------|---------|----------------------|-----------|
| Crew Injuries: | 1 Fatal | Aircraft Damage: | Destroyed |
| Passenger Injuries: | 2 Fatal | Aircraft Fire: | On-Ground |
| Ground Injuries: | N/A | Aircraft Explosion: | On-Ground |
| Total Injuries: | 3 Fatal | Latitude, Longitude: | |

Administrative Information

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|-----------------------------------|--|--------------|------------|
| Investigator In Charge (IIC): | Ralph E Hicks | Report Date: | 04/08/1993 |
| Additional Participating Persons: | RANDY MARTIN; COLLEGE PARK, GA R.S. BOYLE; ARVADA, CO JOHN HUY; WICHITA, KS | | |
| 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](#).