



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Final Report

Location:	DEMOPOLIS, AL	Accident Number:	ATL87FA262
Date & Time:	09/25/1987, 0315 CDT	Registration:	N117EV
Aircraft:	PIPER PA-31-350	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Defining Event:		Injuries:	2 Fatal
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation -		

Analysis

THE PLT OF AN AIRCRAFT CARRYING AN ESTIMATED 317 KILOS OF COCAINE WAS ATTEMPTING TO LAND AT AN APT WHICH DID NOT HAVE A PUBLISHED INSTRUMENT APPROACH PROCEDURE IN IMC. WITNESSES ESTIMATED THAT THE VISIBILITY WAS NO MORE THAN 1/2 MILE IN FOG ABOUT 45 MIN AFTER THE ESTIMATED TIME OF THE ACCIDENT. THE AIRCRAFT COLLIDED WITH A TREE ABOUT 1,400 FEET SHORT OF THE RUNWAY THRESHOLD AND ABOUT 600 FEET TO THE RIGHT OF THE EXTENDED RUNWAY CENTERLINE. GROUND CONTACT WAS MADE ABOUT 380 FEET AFTER COLLIDING WITH THE TREE. THE AIRCRAFT BURNED AFTER GROUND IMPACT. PILOT FLIGHT TIME WAS OBTAINED FROM PILOT'S LAST CFI APPLICATION.

Probable Cause and Findings

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

Findings

Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH OBJECT

Phase of Operation: LANDING

Findings

1. (F) OBJECT - TREE(S)
2. (C) FLT WITH INADQT EN ROUTE/DESTN FACILITIES - ATTEMPTED - PILOT IN COMMAND
3. (F) LIGHT CONDITION - DARK NIGHT
4. WEATHER CONDITION - FOG
5. (C) VFR FLIGHT INTO IMC - ATTEMPTED - PILOT IN COMMAND
6. (C) IN-FLIGHT PLANNING/DECISION - POOR - PILOT IN COMMAND

Occurrence #2: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER

Phase of Operation: DESCENT - UNCONTROLLED

Factual Information

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Airline Transport; Flight Instructor; Commercial	Age:	41, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Multi-engine Land; Single-engine Land	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	Seatbelt
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	Yes
Medical Certification:	Class 1 Valid Medical--w/ waivers/lim.	Last FAA Medical Exam:	12/23/1986
Occupational Pilot:		Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	7000 hours (Total, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	PIPER	Registration:	N117EV
Model/Series:	PA-31-350 PA-31-350	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	No
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	31-8152185
Landing Gear Type:	Retractable - Tricycle	Seats:	8
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	Unknown	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	7000 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	2 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:		Engine Manufacturer:	LYCOMING
ELT:		Engine Model/Series:	LTIO-540-J2BD
Registered Owner:	THOMAS MCVEA	Rated Power:	350 hp
Operator:	THOMAS MCVEA	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Instrument Conditions	Condition of Light:	Night/Dark
Observation Facility, Elevation:	MEI, 0 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	0 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	0250 CDT	Direction from Accident Site:	0°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Unknown / 0 ft agl	Visibility	0 Miles
Lowest Ceiling:	Unknown / 0 ft agl	Visibility (RVR):	0 ft
Wind Speed/Gusts:	3 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	170°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	12° C / 12° C
Precipitation and Obscuration:			
Departure Point:		Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	DEMOPOLIS, AL (7A2)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	0000	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Airport Information

Airport:	DEMOPOLIS MUNICIPAL (7A2)	Runway Surface Type:	Asphalt
Airport Elevation:	112 ft	Runway Surface Condition:	Dry
Runway Used:	4	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:	5000 ft / 100 ft	VFR Approach/Landing:	None

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Fatal	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Passenger Injuries:	1 Fatal	Aircraft Fire:	On-Ground
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	2 Fatal	Latitude, Longitude:	

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	WALTER G STINER	Report Date:	01/11/1989
Additional Participating Persons:	JOHN LAWRENCE; BIRMINGHAM, AL		
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](#).