



National Transportation Safety Board

Aviation Accident Final Report

Location:	CAIRO TOWNSHIP, NY	Accident Number:	NYC90FA039
Date & Time:	12/15/1989, 1738 EST	Registration:	N45CH
Aircraft:	PIPER PA-31-350	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Defining Event:		Injuries:	6 Fatal
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation - Business		

Analysis

DURING A PRE-FLIGHT WEATHER BRIEFING, THE INSTRUMENT RATED PILOT WAS TOLD BY THE AFSS SPECIALIST THAT MARGINAL VFR AND IFR CONDITIONS WOULD PREVAIL ALONG THE ROUTE OF FLIGHT. THE PILOT DID NOT FILE A FLIGHT PLAN. THE AIRPLANE WAS LAST DEPICTED ON RADAR AT 2500 FEET MSL AND HEADING TOWARDS HIGH TERRAIN. A NY STATE TROOPER LEAVING HIS OFFICE ABOUT THE TIME THE ACCIDENT OCCURRED STATED SNOW WAS FALLING VERY HARD AND VISIBILITY WAS LOW. THE STATE TROOPER'S OFFICE WAS ABOUT 5 MILES FROM THE CRASH SITE. THE AIRPLANE HIT A 3400 FOOT MOUNTAIN AT AN ELEVATION OF 2500 FEET. THE AIRPLANE WAS MISSING 4 DAYS AND WAS FOUND BY THE CREW OF A NY STATE POLICE HELICOPTER.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: THE PILOT'S DECISION TO FLY INTO THE KNOWN ADVERSE WEATHER AND HIS FAILURE TO SELECT AN ALTITUDE THAT WOULD PROVIDE TERRAIN CLEARANCE. FACTORS WERE: THE ADVERSE WEATHER AND THE PILOT'S DISREGARD FOR THE FORECASTED CONDITIONS.

Findings

Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER

Phase of Operation: CRUISE - NORMAL

Findings

1. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - LOW CEILING
2. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - SNOW
3. (F) PREFLIGHT BRIEFING SERVICE - DISREGARDED - PILOT IN COMMAND
4. (C) FLIGHT INTO KNOWN ADVERSE WEATHER - PERFORMED - PILOT IN COMMAND
5. (C) PROPER ALTITUDE - NOT SELECTED - PILOT IN COMMAND

Factual Information

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Flight Instructor; Commercial	Age:	27, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Multi-engine Land; Single-engine Land	Seat Occupied:	Unknown
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	Seatbelt, Shoulder harness
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):		Toxicology Performed:	Yes
Medical Certification:	Class 2 Valid Medical--no waivers/lim.	Last FAA Medical Exam:	12/08/1988
Occupational Pilot:		Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	3500 hours (Total, all aircraft), 100 hours (Total, this make and model)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	PIPER	Registration:	N45CH
Model/Series:	PA-31-350 PA-31-350	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	No
Airworthiness Certificate:		Serial Number:	31-7852002
Landing Gear Type:	Retractable - Tricycle	Seats:	6
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	Unknown	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	7000 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	0 Hours	Engines:	2 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	2500 Hours	Engine Manufacturer:	LYCOMING
ELT:	Installed, not activated	Engine Model/Series:	TSIO-540-J2BD
Registered Owner:		Rated Power:	350 hp
Operator:	AERO-VENTURE INC.	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Instrument Conditions	Condition of Light:	Night/Dark
Observation Facility, Elevation:	ALB, 285 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	40 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	1650 EST	Direction from Accident Site:	31°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Unknown / 0 ft agl	Visibility	0 Miles
Lowest Ceiling:	Obscured / 0 ft agl	Visibility (RVR):	0 ft
Wind Speed/Gusts:	6 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	40°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:		Temperature/Dew Point:	-6°C / -13°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:			
Departure Point:	GLENS FALLS, NY (GFL)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	MONTGOMERY, NY (MGJ)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	1645 EST	Type of Airspace:	

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Fatal	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Passenger Injuries:	5 Fatal	Aircraft Fire:	On-Ground
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	On-Ground
Total Injuries:	6 Fatal	Latitude, Longitude:	

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	ALAN J YURNAN	Report Date:	07/22/1992
Additional Participating Persons:	AL BELCHER; ALBANY, NY JAMES BROWN; WILLIAMSPORT, PA PAUL LEHMAN, JR.; 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.ntsb.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](#).