



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Final Report

Location:	INDEPENDENCE, CA	Accident Number:	LAX92LA194
Date & Time:	05/02/1992, 0930 PDT	Registration:	N59781
Aircraft:	PIPER PA-31-325	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Defining Event:		Injuries:	2 Serious
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

Analysis

THE PIPER NAVAJO HAD NOT FLOWN FOR ABOUT 9 MONTHS. DURING PREPARATION FOR FLIGHT THE PILOT DISCOVERED THAT THE BATTERY WAS DEAD. THE BATTERY WAS REMOVED FOR CHARGING BY THE FIXED BASE OPERATOR, THE BATTERY BOX WAS CLEANED AND PAINTED. THE OPERATOR ADVISED THAT THE BATTERY WAS OVER 3 YEARS OLD PLUS THE 9 MONTHS OF NON USE RENDERED THE BATTERY NON RELIABLE AND RECOMMENDED THAT IT BE REPLACED. THE PILOT CHOOSE NOT TO CHANGE THE BATTERY. THE PILOT REQUESTED THAT THE MAIN TANKS BE TOPPED. THE PILOT FLEW THE AIRPLANE FOR A SHORT TIME. THE NEXT DAY (DAY OF THE ACCIDENT) THE PILOT, WHILE PREFLIGHTING THE AIRPLANE, DISCOVERED THAT THE BATTERY WAS AGAIN DEAD SO HE REQUESTED AN EXTERNAL POWER CART FOR STARTING. ABOUT AN HOUR INTO THE CROSS COUNTRY FLIGHT THE PILOT STATED THAT BOTH ENGINES QUIT WHILE ON THE AUX TANKS. HE STATED THAT HE HAD NO ELECTRICAL POWER FOR FUEL BOOST PUMPS OR STARTERS. THE AIRPLANE COLLIDED WITH ELECTRICAL POWER LINES DURING THE EMERGENCY LANDING ATTEMPT IN AN ALFALFA FIELD.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: FUEL STARVATION DUE TO 1) THE PILOTS INADEQUATE PREFLIGHT PLANNING PREPARATION, 2) THE PILOT'S FUEL SYSTEM MANAGEMENT, AND 3) HIS OPERATION OF THE AIRCRAFT WITH KNOWN DEFICIENCIES IN THE AIRCRAFT ELECTRICAL SYSTEM. FACTORS IN THE ACCIDENT WERE: 1) THE DETERIORATED CONDITION OF THE AIRPLANE BATTERY, AND, 2) THE PILOTS LACK OF RECENT EXPERIENCE.

Findings

Occurrence #1: LOSS OF ENGINE POWER(TOTAL) - NONMECHANICAL

Phase of Operation: CRUISE - NORMAL

Findings

1. (F) 2 ENGINES
2. (C) FLUID,FUEL - STARVATION
3. (C) FUEL SYSTEM - IMPROPER USE OF - PILOT IN COMMAND
4. (F) ELECTRICAL SYSTEM,BATTERY - DETERIORATED
5. (C) PREFLIGHT PLANNING/PREPARATION - INADEQUATE - PILOT IN COMMAND
6. (C) OPERATION WITH KNOWN DEFICIENCIES IN EQUIPMENT - ATTEMPTED - PILOT IN COMMAND
7. (F) LACK OF RECENT EXPERIENCE - PILOT IN COMMAND

Occurrence #2: FORCED LANDING

Phase of Operation: DESCENT - EMERGENCY

Occurrence #3: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH OBJECT

Phase of Operation: DESCENT - EMERGENCY

Findings

8. OBJECT - WIRE,TRANSMISSION

Factual Information

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	46, 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:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 3 Valid Medical--w/ waivers/lim.	Last FAA Medical Exam:	04/26/1991
Occupational Pilot:	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:		
Flight Time:	1800 hours (Total, all aircraft), 500 hours (Total, this make and model), 1 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 1 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 1 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	PIPER	Registration:	N59781
Model/Series:	PA-31-325 PA-31-325	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	No
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	7612023
Landing Gear Type:	Retractable - Tricycle	Seats:	7
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	07/01/1991, Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	6500 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	2 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	1750 Hours	Engine Manufacturer:	LYCOMING
ELT:		Engine Model/Series:	TIO-540-F2BD
Registered Owner:	CROSS COUNTRY CONSTRUCTION,INC	Rated Power:	325 hp
Operator:	CROSS COUNTRY CONSTRUCTION,INC	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual Conditions	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	BIH, 4120 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	40 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	0956 PDT	Direction from Accident Site:	330°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear / 0 ft agl	Visibility	45 Miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None / 0 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:	22° C / 2° C
Precipitation and Obscuration:			
Departure Point:	HEMET, CA (HMT)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	CARSON CITY, NV (004)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	0830 PDT	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Wreckage and Impact Information

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

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	GEORGE E PETERSON	Report Date:	07/26/1993
Additional Participating Persons:	JERRY E GAVETTE; LAS VEGAS, NV		
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 pubinquiry@ntsb.gov , or at 800-877-6799. Dockets released after this date are available at http://dms.nts.gov/pubdms/ .		

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