



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Final Report

Location:	HIGH ISLAND 334, GM	Accident Number:	FTW94LA146
Date & Time:	05/07/1994, 1806 CDT	Registration:	N3648E
Aircraft:	PIPER PA-46-310P	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Defining Event:		Injuries:	2 Minor, 2 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

Analysis

THE AIRPLANE WAS EN ROUTE AT 14,000 FEET MSL WHEN THE MANIFOLD PRESSURE DROPPED FROM 30 TO 18 INCHES. ELEVEN MINUTES LATER THE OIL LIGHT CAME 'ON'. THE AIRPLANE CONTINUED UNDER PARTIAL POWER AT AN AIRSPEED OF 90 KNOTS, WHILE DESCENDING AT 100 TO 300 FEET PER MINUTE (FPM). BY 9,500 FEET MSL THE ENGINE OIL PRESSURE DROPPED TO ZERO. THE PILOT SHUT DOWN THE ENGINE AND MADE A FORCED LANDING IN THE GULF OF MEXICO NEAR A SHIP. THE AIRPLANE REMAINED AFLOAT FOR 5 TO 7 MINUTES. DURING THIS TIME, THE EMERGENCY EXIT WAS OPENED, ALL OCCUPANTS DONNED A LIFE VEST, EXITED, AND BOARDED THE LIFE RAFT, WHICH THE PILOT HAD DEPLOYED. ALL WERE RESCUED BY PERSONNEL FROM THE SHIP. THE AIRPLANE WAS NOT RECOVERED; THEREFORE, THE CAUSE OF THE POWER LOSS WAS NOT DETERMINED.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: A TOTAL LOSS OF ENGINE POWER WITH THE CAUSE UNDETERMINED. A FACTOR WAS THE LACK OF SUITABLE TERRAIN FOR THE FORCED LANDING.

Findings

Occurrence #1: LOSS OF ENGINE POWER

Phase of Operation: CRUISE - NORMAL

Findings

1. (C) REASON FOR OCCURRENCE UNDETERMINED

Occurrence #2: FORCED LANDING

Phase of Operation: DESCENT - EMERGENCY

Occurrence #3: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER

Phase of Operation: LANDING - FLARE/TOUCHDOWN

Findings

2. (F) TERRAIN CONDITION - NONE SUITABLE

3. TERRAIN CONDITION - WATER

Factual Information

On May 7, 1994, at 1806 central daylight time, a Piper PA-46-310P, N3648E, was destroyed during a forced landing in the Gulf of Mexico, approximately one hundred and ten miles offshore from Houston, Texas. The airline transport pilot and one passenger sustained minor injuries. The remaining two passengers were not injured. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed for the personal cross country flight.

During telephone interviews the pilot reported that the airplane was en route at 14,000 feet MSL on an IFR flight plan from Cozumel, Mexico, to Houston, Texas, when the manifold pressure dropped from 30 to 18 inches. Eleven minutes later, the pilot observed the oil light "ON". The airplane continued under partial power, at an airspeed of 90 knots, while descending at a rate of 300 fpm to 100 fpm. By 9,500 feet MSL the engine oil pressure dropped to zero and the propeller was windmilling. The pilot shut down the engine, and executed an emergency ditching near a ship.

The pilot further reported that all checklist items except the master switch "OFF" was completed prior to the water ditching. The airplane remained afloat for five to seven minutes. During this time, the emergency exit was opened, all occupants donned life vests, exited, and boarded the life raft.

Neither the owner nor pilot responded to numerous request for a completed Pilot/Operator Report (NTSB Form 6120.1/2).

The airplane was not recovered.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Airline Transport	Age:	, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Multi-engine Land; Single-engine Land	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	Helicopter	Restraint Used:	Seatbelt, Shoulder harness
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 1 Valid Medical--no waivers/lim.	Last FAA Medical Exam:	10/30/1993
Occupational Pilot:	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:		
Flight Time:	1500 hours (Total, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	PIPER	Registration:	N3648E
Model/Series:	PA-46-310P PA-46-310P	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	No
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	46-8408067
Landing Gear Type:	Retractable - Tricycle	Seats:	6
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	01/21/1994, Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	4100 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:		Engine Manufacturer:	CONTINENTAL
ELT:	Installed	Engine Model/Series:	TSIO-520-BE1
Registered Owner:	MARTIN, ADREN & COHEN, HOWARD	Rated Power:	310 hp
Operator:	MARTIN, ADREN & COHEN, HOWARD	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual Conditions	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	, 0 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	0 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	0000	Direction from Accident Site:	0°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear / 0 ft agl	Visibility	20 Miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None / 0 ft agl	Visibility (RVR):	0 ft
Wind Speed/Gusts:	/	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:		Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:		Temperature/Dew Point:	
Precipitation and Obscuration:			
Departure Point:	COZUMEL, OF (MMCZ)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	IFR
Destination:	HOUSTON, TX (HOU)	Type of Clearance:	IFR
Departure Time:	0000	Type of Airspace:	Class E

Wreckage and Impact Information

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

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	JOYCE M SMITH,	Report Date:	12/07/1994
Additional Participating Persons:	THOMAS L PACE; HOUSTON, TX		
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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