



# National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Final Report

---

<b>Location:</b>	EL SEGUNDO, CA	<b>Accident Number:</b>	LAX96FA091
<b>Date &amp; Time:</b>	01/09/1996, 0914 PST	<b>Registration:</b>	N3116C
<b>Aircraft:</b>	Partenavia AF68TP SPARTACUS	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Destroyed
<b>Defining Event:</b>		<b>Injuries:</b>	1 Fatal

**Flight Conducted Under:** Part 91: General Aviation - Positioning

---

## Analysis

According to radar data, the airplane was in level flight off the southern California coastline at 1,800 feet msl when it suddenly pitched up to 2,000 feet msl and then was lost from radar. The pilot was positioning the airplane for a contract flight. The airplane went down in waters 2,700 to 3,000 feet deep. The wreckage was not recovered; however, limited debris from the wreckage provided identification of the airplane. According to the operator, the autopilot would normally be used for cross-country flights.

## Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: loss of control for undetermined reasons.

## Findings

---

Occurrence #1: LOSS OF CONTROL - IN FLIGHT  
Phase of Operation: CRUISE - NORMAL

### Findings

1. (C) REASON FOR OCCURRENCE UNDETERMINED  
-----

Occurrence #2: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER  
Phase of Operation: DESCENT - UNCONTROLLED

## Factual Information

### HISTORY OF FLIGHT

On January 9, 1996, at 0914 hours Pacific standard time, a Partenavia, AF68TP Spartacus, N3116C, was destroyed after an uncontrolled descent into the Pacific ocean about 14 miles west-southwest of El Segundo, California. The pilot was presumed to have been fatally injured. According to a company search pilot, visual meteorological conditions prevailed at the accident area about 1.5 hours after the time of the accident. No flight plan was filed for the positioning flight which originated at Oxnard, California, on the morning of the accident for a flight to San Diego, California.

The aircraft departed Oxnard on a special VFR clearance. The tops of the clouds were reported to be about 1,200 feet msl. The aircraft transitioned southbound through the NAWS Point Mugu airspace. The Point Mugu radar approach control monitored the aircraft on radar for about 25 miles. The pilot was subsequently given a frequency change to SOCAL Tracon. There was no contact made with that facility. A search was initiated when the aircraft failed to arrive at the intended destination. A review of the recorded radar data revealed the aircraft was level at 1,800 feet msl and then climbed to about 2,000 feet msl, at which time it disappeared from radar.

### PILOT INFORMATION

According to the operator, the ATP rated pilot had accumulated 8,963 total flight hours with over 1,000 hours in the airplane make and model. He had flown 32 hours in the past 30 days. On November 29, 1995, he had successfully passed a first-class flight physical with no limitations.

### AIRPLANE INFORMATION

The airplane had accumulated 4,540 total flight hours. The last annual inspection was conducted 25 hours prior to the accident on December 19, 1995.

The aircraft was equipped with a King KFC-150, autopilot system.

### METEOROLOGICAL INFORMATION

The Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) scheduled weather observation at 0950 hours reported 500 feet scattered, 25,000 feet scattered, visibility 1.5 miles with fog and haze, temperature and dew point 57 degrees Fahrenheit, wind 120 degrees at 3 knots, and the altimeter was 30.17 inHg of mercury.

### WRECKAGE AND IMPACT INFORMATION

The wreckage was not located. According to the U. S. Coast Guard (USCG), the water depth at the accident area was estimated to be between 2,700 and 3,000 feet deep.

The identification of the aircraft was made from personal baggage and items belonging to the pilot, as well as components and paperwork from the aircraft that were found floating and retrieved by the USCG, and the Los Angeles County Harbor Master.

## Pilot Information

<b>Certificate:</b>	Airline Transport	<b>Age:</b>	47, Male
<b>Airplane Rating(s):</b>	Multi-engine Land; Single-engine Land	<b>Seat Occupied:</b>	Left
<b>Other Aircraft Rating(s):</b>	None	<b>Restraint Used:</b>	
<b>Instrument Rating(s):</b>	Airplane	<b>Second Pilot Present:</b>	No
<b>Instructor Rating(s):</b>	None	<b>Toxicology Performed:</b>	No
<b>Medical Certification:</b>	Class 1 Valid Medical--no waivers/lim.	<b>Last FAA Medical Exam:</b>	11/29/1995
<b>Occupational Pilot:</b>		<b>Last Flight Review or Equivalent:</b>	
<b>Flight Time:</b>	8963 hours (Total, all aircraft), 1000 hours (Total, this make and model), 8803 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 135 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 32 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 1 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

## Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

<b>Aircraft Make:</b>	Partenavia	<b>Registration:</b>	N3116C
<b>Model/Series:</b>	AF68TP SPARTACUS AF68TP SP	<b>Aircraft Category:</b>	Airplane
<b>Year of Manufacture:</b>		<b>Amateur Built:</b>	No
<b>Airworthiness Certificate:</b>	Normal	<b>Serial Number:</b>	8007
<b>Landing Gear Type:</b>	Tricycle	<b>Seats:</b>	10
<b>Date/Type of Last Inspection:</b>	12/19/1995, Annual	<b>Certified Max Gross Wt.:</b>	5732 lbs
<b>Time Since Last Inspection:</b>	25 Hours	<b>Engines:</b>	2 Turbo Prop
<b>Airframe Total Time:</b>	4540 Hours	<b>Engine Manufacturer:</b>	Allison
<b>ELT:</b>	Installed, not activated	<b>Engine Model/Series:</b>	250-B17
<b>Registered Owner:</b>	THE PARTENAVIA V	<b>Rated Power:</b>	369 hp
<b>Operator:</b>	ASPEN HELICOPTER, INC.	<b>Operating Certificate(s) Held:</b>	On-demand Air Taxi (135)
<b>Operator Does Business As:</b>	ASPEN HELICOPTERS	<b>Operator Designator Code:</b>	IGAA

## 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:	Scattered / 1500 ft agl	Visibility	10 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
Precipitation and Obscuration:			
Departure Point:	OXNARD, CA (OXR)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	SAN DIEGO, CA (MYF)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	0903 PST	Type of Airspace:	Class E

## Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Fatal	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Passenger Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Fire:	Unknown
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	Unknown
Total Injuries:	1 Fatal	Latitude, Longitude:	

## Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	GEORGE E PETERSON	Report Date:	07/11/1996
Additional Participating Persons:	TOM CLAIRMONT; LOS ANGELES, CA		
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 <a href="mailto:pubinquiry@ntsb.gov">pubinquiry@ntsb.gov</a> , or at 800-877-6799. Dockets released after this date are available at <a href="http://dms.nts.gov/pubdms/">http://dms.nts.gov/pubdms/</a> .		

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), established in 1967, is an independent federal agency mandated by Congress through the Independent Safety Board Act of 1974 to investigate transportation accidents, determine the probable causes of the accidents, issue safety recommendations, study transportation safety issues, and evaluate the safety effectiveness of government agencies involved in transportation. The NTSB makes public its actions and decisions through accident reports, safety studies, special investigation reports, safety recommendations, and statistical reviews.

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](#).