



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Final Report

Location:	BISHOP, CA	Accident Number:	LAX99FA096
Date & Time:	02/12/1999, 1030 PST	Registration:	N205RA
Aircraft:	Beech C99	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Defining Event:		Injuries:	1 Fatal
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation - Positioning		

Analysis

The airline transport pilot was repositioning the Beech C99 turboprop cargo hauler on a 73-mile trip without cargo. The pilot had been flying this route for some time and this was his last trip before upgrading to a larger aircraft and route. He told friends that he would take pictures of the scenic parts of the route on his last trip. Three witnesses reported seeing the airplane flying west at low altitude. Two of the witnesses were local ranchers who saw the airplane enter the White Mountains near Trace Plumas Canyon about 7,000 to 8,000 feet msl. White Mountain is 14,246 feet, tapering off north to 13,559 feet and south to 11,285 feet msl. The airplane was reported missing and 2 days later located on White Mountain about 9,400 feet msl. The company flight planned route is 15 miles south of the accident site through Westgard Pass, about 7,291 feet msl. Examination of the low energy impact and the subsequent recovery inspection failed to reveal any mechanical issues.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: the pilot's failure to follow procedures and directives and his failure to maintain clearance from mountainous terrain.

Findings

Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER
Phase of Operation: MANEUVERING

Findings

1. TERRAIN CONDITION - MOUNTAINOUS/HILLY
2. LIGHT CONDITION - DAYLIGHT
3. (C) CLEARANCE - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND
4. (C) PROCEDURES/DIRECTIVES - NOT FOLLOWED - PILOT IN COMMAND

Factual Information

HISTORY OF FLIGHT

On February 12, 1999, about 1030 hours Pacific standard time, a Beech C99, N205RA, was destroyed in an in-flight collision with mountainous terrain near Bishop, California. The airline transport pilot, the sole occupant, was fatally injured. Ameriflight, Inc. operated the flight as a company positioning flight under 14 CFR Part 91. According to witness observations, visual meteorological conditions prevailed along the route of flight and the vicinity of the accident site. The flight originated at Tonopah, Nevada, at 1000 for the 73-mile trip to Bishop, and a company VFR flight plan was filed. The aircraft was not carrying cargo at the time of the accident.

No eyewitnesses to the accident were identified. The aircraft was reported missing on February 12 by the operator when it failed to arrive at Bishop as scheduled. Search efforts were initiated and the wreckage was subsequently found February 14 on the eastern slopes of White Mountain in the Inyo National Forest.

Several ground-based witnesses (one a pilot) were identified along the route of flight in Dyer Valley, on the east side of White Mountain. The witnesses observed the aircraft flying between 7,000 and 8,000 feet msl as it entered an area near Trace Plumas Canyon on White Mountain and begin a gradual left turn. The aircraft then disappeared from view. White Mountain is 14,246 feet msl, tapering off north to 13,559 and south to 11,285 feet msl. The canyon leads to near the accident site. The company flight planned route is 15 miles south of the accident site through Westgard Pass, elevation 7,271 feet msl.

According to the operator, the pilot had successfully bid a captain position on a larger aircraft and this was to be his last trip along this route. Several acquaintances of the pilot located at Tonopah reported that he intended to take a camera with him and photograph some scenic locations along this route.

PILOT INFORMATION

According to company records, the airline transport rated pilot had accumulated 2,958 total flight hours with 692 hours in the accident make and model.

AIRPLANE INFORMATION

The airplane was maintained in accordance with a Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Approved Inspection Program (AAIP) at 150-hour intervals. The airplane had accrued 105 hours since the last inspection and about 20,521 total flight hours.

METEOROLOGICAL INFORMATION

The nearest weather reporting location to the accident is Bishop. At 0956, Bishop was reporting: sky clear, visibility 10; wind 360 degrees at 3 knots; temperature 39 degrees Fahrenheit; dew point 9 degrees Fahrenheit; altimeter 30.42 inHg.

MEDICAL AND PATHOLOGICAL INFORMATION

On February 17, 1999, the Mono County Medical Examiner performed an autopsy on the pilot. During the course of the autopsy the FAA Civil Aeromedical Institute in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma obtained samples for toxicological analysis. The analyses were negative for carbon monoxide, cyanide, volatiles, and drugs.

WRECKAGE AND IMPACT INFORMATION

The inbound heading to the accident site was estimated about 210 degrees with the wreckage ending about 360 degrees, and contained within about a 100-foot circle. The wreckage was located at 37 degrees 34.264 minutes north latitude by 118 degrees 09.141 minutes west longitude, about 9,400 feet msl.

A postcrash fire consumed the aircraft center section, with some fire damage to the engines. The entire empennage was severed from the fuselage at the horizontal stabilizer leading edge and was free of fire damage. There was light damage to the three stabilizers and their control surfaces. The electrically driven stabilator actuator shaft extension was measured 5.5 inches. According to the manufacturer, 5.6 inches is considered to be zero or neutral trim.

Both propeller assemblies were found broken free from the engine gearboxes and without fire damage. The propeller blades exhibited leading edge damage and chordwise striations with trailing edge "S" bending. The right propeller hub assembly retained the three blades within the hub. The left propeller hub retained two blades in the hub with one broken free.

The left engine remained cowled with minor fire damage. The right engine was uncowed and fire damaged. The engines were free from wing structure.

The instrument panel was lying on the ground intact but fire damaged. The structure around had burned away.

The empty belly cargo container was not fire damaged and about 30 percent impact damaged.

The left wing was severed just outboard of the engine nacelle retaining the aileron and outboard flap section. The booted section of the leading edge was crushed inward past the main spar. The section was free of fire damage.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Both engines were shipped to Pratt and Whitney Canada for a teardown examination. According to the report, "Both left and right hand engines displayed similar rotational signatures to their internal components characteristic of the engines producing power at impact, likely in a middle to high power range." A copy of the report is attached.

Some radar data was recovered from Salt Lake Air Route Traffic Control Center for the area around Tonopah, Nevada, 5,426 feet msl, and FAA High Desert Approach for the area near Silver Peak, Nevada, 4,500 feet msl.

The wreckage was released to the insurance company representative on January 31, 2000.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Airline Transport	Age:	29, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Multi-engine Land; Single-engine Land	Seat Occupied:	Unknown
Other Aircraft Rating(s):		Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	Airplane Multi-engine; Airplane Single-engine; Instrument Airplane	Toxicology Performed:	Yes
Medical Certification:	Class 1 Valid Medical--no waivers/lim.	Last FAA Medical Exam:	07/13/1998
Occupational Pilot:		Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	2958 hours (Total, all aircraft), 692 hours (Total, this make and model), 2858 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 253 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 87 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 4 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Beech	Registration:	N205RA
Model/Series:	C99 C99	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	No
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	U-205
Landing Gear Type:	Retractable - Tricycle	Seats:	2
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	02/03/1999, AAIP	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	11300 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	105 Hours	Engines:	2 Turbo Prop
Airframe Total Time:	20522 Hours	Engine Manufacturer:	P&W
ELT:	Installed, not activated	Engine Model/Series:	PT6A-36
Registered Owner:	RATHEON AIRCRAFT CREDIT CORP.	Rated Power:	715 hp
Operator:	AMERIFLIGHT, INC.	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	On-demand Air Taxi (135)

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:	15 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	0956 PST	Direction from Accident Site:	225°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear / 0 ft agl	Visibility	10 Miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None / 0 ft agl	Visibility (RVR):	0 ft
Wind Speed/Gusts:	3 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	360°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	4°C / -13°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:			
Departure Point:	TONOPAH, NV (TPH)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	Company VFR
Destination:	BISHOP, CA (BIH)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	1000 PST	Type of Airspace:	Class E

Wreckage and Impact Information

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

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	GEORGE E PETERSON	Report Date:	08/13/2001
Additional Participating Persons:	ADRIAN GRIEVE; RENO, NV HAROLD R BARRENTINE; WICHITA, KS TOM A BERTHE; QUEBEC,		
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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