



National Transportation Safety Board

Aviation Accident Final Report

Location:	Belle Glade, FL	Accident Number:	MIA02LA061
Date & Time:	02/16/2002, 0800 EST	Registration:	N715RM
Aircraft:	Smith, Ted Aerostar 601P	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	1 Serious
Flight Conducted Under:		Part 91: General Aviation - Business	

Analysis

The pilot was aware of thunderstorms along his route of flight. He paralleled a line of storms for about 20 minutes looking for a hole in the storms to penetrate, without any success. He turned, and climbed to an altitude of 13,500 feet. He noticed what seemed to be an opening to the south, and turned southbound, through the hole, for about 2 or 3 miles, and then the hole closed. He turned the airplane to the right to reverse course, when he inadvertently penetrated a cell. At this point he said he "lost control of the airplane, and was turned upside down.....heading straight down towards the ground.....traveling at a high rate of speed.....the airspeed indicator was pegged." At an altitude of about 2,000 feet, he was able to level the wings, reduce power and raise the nose. He said he was then able to slow the airplane for a "controlled crash landing," straight ahead in a sugar cane field. According to the Sheriff's Report, he struck the field in which the aircraft was lying in immediately after slowing the airplane. The distance from the initial impact area to where the airplane came to rest was about 75 yards.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: the pilot continued flight into known adverse weather resulting in a loss of control and subsequent impact with the ground.

Findings

Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT ENCOUNTER WITH WEATHER

Phase of Operation: MANEUVERING

Findings

1. WEATHER CONDITION - TURBULENCE(THUNDERSTORMS)
2. (C) FLIGHT INTO KNOWN ADVERSE WEATHER - CONTINUED - PILOT IN COMMAND

Occurrence #2: LOSS OF CONTROL - IN FLIGHT

Phase of Operation: MANEUVERING

Findings

3. AIRCRAFT CONTROL - NOT POSSIBLE - PILOT IN COMMAND

Occurrence #3: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER

Phase of Operation: DESCENT - UNCONTROLLED

Findings

4. TERRAIN CONDITION - OPEN FIELD

Factual Information

On February 16, 2002, about 0800 eastern standard time, a Ted Smith Aerostar 601P, N715RM, registered to and operated by Trans Porter International Airlines, as a Title 14 CFR Part 91 business flight impacted the ground near, Belle Glade, Florida. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed. No flight plan was filed. The airplane was destroyed. The commercial rated-pilot reported serious injuries. The flight had originated from Boca Raton, Florida, at 0730, and was en route to Marathon, Florida, to pick up some individuals and then fly them to North Carolina.

The pilot said he was aware of reported thunderstorms near the departure airport, and along his route of flight. He said, initially he "paralleled" the weather to the west and north of the line of storms. He flew west for about 20 minutes looking for a hole in the storms to penetrate, without any success. He turned back to the east, and climbed to an altitude of 13,500 feet. He noticed what seemed to be an opening to the south, and turned southbound "through the hole," for about 2 or 3 miles, when "the hole closed." He turned the airplane to the right to reverse course, when he "accidentally penetrated a cell." At this point he said he "lost control of the airplane, and was turned upside down...heading straight down towards the ground...traveling at a high rate of speed...the airspeed indicator was pegged." He said he was able to level the wings, reduce power and raise the nose. He said he was then able to "slow" the airplane for a "controlled crash landing," straight ahead in a sugar cane field, about 25 miles southeast of Belle Glade, Florida.

According to the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Report, the pilot told a deputy at the accident scene, that at an altitude of about 13,000 feet, in the middle of a large storm, he lost control of the airplane, the airplane began spinning out of control, that he was not able to regain control until he reached 2,000 feet, where he was able to lift the nose of the airplane, and impacted in the field. The sheriff's report stated that the distance from the initial impact area to where the airplane came to rest was about 75 yards. The deputies observed about 15 to 20 gallons of fuel.

The airplane was released to Mr. Charles Maynard, Claims Adjuster for the owner's insurance company, on February 20, 2002.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial	Age:	45, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Multi-engine Land; Single-engine Land	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	Seatbelt
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 2 Valid Medical--no waivers/lim.	Last FAA Medical Exam:	02/05/2002
Occupational Pilot:		Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	09/05/2001
Flight Time:	1884 hours (Total, all aircraft), 120 hours (Total, this make and model), 1380 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 55 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 23 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 6 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Smith, Ted Aerostar	Registration:	N715RM
Model/Series:	601P	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	No
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	61P0216-024
Landing Gear Type:	Retractable - Tricycle	Seats:	6
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	09/05/2001, Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	6000 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	130 Hours	Engines:	2 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	1950 Hours	Engine Manufacturer:	Lycoming
ELT:	Installed, not activated	Engine Model/Series:	IO-540-51A5
Registered Owner:	Trans Porter Intl Airlines	Rated Power:	300 hp
Operator:	Trans Porter Intl Airlines	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual Conditions	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	PBI, 19 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	25 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	0852 EST	Direction from Accident Site:	90°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Scattered / 1500 ft agl	Visibility	10 Miles
Lowest Ceiling:	Broken / 7000 ft agl	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	5 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	310°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30.08 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	21°C / 17°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:			
Departure Point:	Boca Raton, FL (BCT)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	Marathon, FL (MTH)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	0730 EST	Type of Airspace:	Class E

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Serious	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 Serious	Latitude, Longitude:	26.683333, 80.633333

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Alan J Yurman	Report Date:	08/26/2002
Additional Participating Persons:	John Roseborough; FAA; Fort Lauderdale, 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](#).