Accident Narrative

On December 2, 2011, N90QL, a Beechcraft King Air F-90, departed the Wharton Regional Airport, in Wharton, Texas (KARM), for the intended destination of Midland Air Park, in Midland, Texas (KMDD). The FAA certified Commercial Pilot received a weather briefing from the Houston Automated Flight Service Station and filed an Instrument Flight Rules (IFR), flight plan. The pilot was the sole occupant.

The flight departed KARM approximately 06:26 AM CST and proceeded on northwesterly direction toward KMDD. Fort Worth Center Air Traffic Control handed off N90QL to the Midland International Air Traffic Control in Midland, Texas, (MAF TRACON). The pilot contacted MAF TRACON and requested the KMDD RNAV Approach to runway 25 at 07:49 AM CST. The pilot was cleared direct CIRIT intersection at 07:51AM CST. At 07:52 AM CST the pilot acknowledged pilot reports from other aircraft regarding light to moderate clear icing from 5,000 feet and below approximately, 4 miles northeast of the Midland International Airport in Midland, Texas, (KMAF).

The pilot was cleared for the RNAV Approach at 07:55AM CST and was cleared down to descend to 4,500 feet Mean Seal Level.

At 07:58 AM CST the pilot was informed by MAF TRACON, his course was not tracking toward the approach course. The pilot stated he was having problems with the Global Position System (GPS), and autopilot. At 08:00AM CST MAF TRACON cancelled the approach clearance and began vectoring the aircraft to the northeast and provided RADAR vectors to the RNAV 25 Approach. The aircraft was cleared to maintain 4, 500 feet MSL.

At 08:05 AM CST the pilot was cleared to turn right to 220 degrees and cleared for the approach 6 miles northeast of the Final Approach Fix maintain 4,500 feet.

At 08:06 AM CST MAF TRACON informed N90QL it appeared the aircraft was half a mile south of course. The pilot acknowledged and continued the approach. The RADAR information provided from the MAF TRACON indicated the aircraft ground speed was 130 knots. KMDD surface winds recorded northeast winds from 7 to 9 knots.

At 08:07 AM CST the pilot was cleared to 360 degrees heading and 5,000 feet in the event of a missed approach. The pilot acknowledged. He was then advised to cancel IFR in the air or on the ground on the clearance delivery frequency. Change to the advisory frequency was approved.

At 08:08 AM CST a Cheyenne reported moderate icing conditions between 5,000 and 5,500 feet MSL.

At 08:10 AM CST an EMB 120 reported light clear ice and the outside air temperature was at the freezing point (0°C).

According to MAF TRACON recording of the flight, the ground speed varied between 140 and 150 knots. At 08:09:59 N90QL was at 2,900 feet and a ground speed of 100 knots, when the aircraft began a turn to left southwest bound and continued along this course until the Radar identification was lost at 08:10:28. The aircraft crashed into a residential area located at the corner of 4500 Casper and Trevino and is located 3688 feet (0.7 statute miles), east of the approach end for KMDD runway 25.

An interview with the pilot was conducted on December 2, 2011, at the Midland Memorial Hospital Emergency Room at approximately 03:30 PM CST. [The pilot] provided the following statements:

He was handed off by Fort Worth Center to Midland Approach (MAF TRACON) and was cleared to the FAF for the 24 RNAV Approach at KMDD. Air Traffic Control informed him he was not going to the Final Approach Fix. The auto pilot made a 90 degree turn to the left. He popped the boots twice, ice wasn't too bad. He continued the approach and didn't see the ground. He did a missed approach. He pilot added power with the auto pilot engaged. The aircraft banked 90 degrees to the left. The pilot disconnected the autopilot and attempted to level the wings and in doing so, the aircraft entered a 90 degree bank to the right. The pilot configured the aircraft with approach and the landing gear down prior to reaching the final approach fix. The pilot stated the aircraft remained in this configuration; he never retracted the gear and flaps. The pilot stated he maintained a target airspeed speed of 120 knots on approach and 100 knots close to the ground. Pilot stated he was close to 80 knots when the aircraft was in the 90 right bank.

Right windshield was covered in ice. The left windshield had ice but not as bad. The pilot stated he believed the loss of control was primarily due to ice. The pilot stated he received reports of rime ice from previous pilots in the area.

This concludes the interview statements made by [the pilot], and are true and accurate to the best of my knowledge.

Gordon D. Morris
FAA Aviation Safety Inspector (Operations), Lubbock ASW-13 FSDO