

Sir,

The morning of the 23rd of March, myself, Mike and Rebecca Leinen [REDACTED] [REDACTED] were flying from Colorado Springs Airport to Ft. Collins (Northern Colorado Regional Airport) and back. The purpose was to build fixed wing time as I plan on separating from Active Duty Army where I serve as a Captain and UH-60M Blackhawk pilot in command and continuing with the airlines through a position with Trans State Airlines. I had attempted this same flight the day prior but had cancelled due to weather conditions. On Saturday, we met at the Peterson Air Force Aero Club to begin the day's flight. We were briefed locally for our flight and received multiple weather briefs before takeoff. The only concern was the possibility of precipitation late that afternoon. The three of us departed from KCOS that morning on a Cessna 172 (T-41D) to complete our flight once weather was cleared and pre-flight and run-up was completed. En route to Ft. Collins, we remained west of Denver due to its class B airspace. We were vectored through the airspace by Denver Center in order to remain clear and reach our destination of KFNL. As we approached KFNL from the southwest, I made a call on the airport's CTAF that our aircraft was about to enter right traffic for RWY 15. After I completed the call, another aviator called back advising us about the significant down drafts on approach to RWY15. I acknowledged the transmission and continued on. As I entered the traffic pattern and completed my base turn, I encountered the severe down-drafts/microbursts the aviator had mentioned in his radio transmission. From there, the decision was made to turn back to the south-west where we had come from, and leave the area. I attempted to add full throttle and propeller and climb out of the situation and return to the area where we had come from. This area did not have winds or cloud cover and was our escape route. As I attempted to climb, I was unable to establish controlled flight and struck both a power-line and tree as I was attempting to depart back to the southwest. From there, the aircraft contacted the ground and was unrecoverable. My two passengers were luckily able to walk away and I was taken to the local hospital. This is a summary of the events as I recall them that day. If there are any questions, please do not hesitate to email or call me. Thank you for your time.

v/r,

Bryant P. Knef  
[REDACTED]