

ACCIDENT N750TJ
January 24, 2002 1649EST
MELBOURNE INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
MELBOURNE FLORIDA

AIRCRAFT:

Aircraft was an experimental amateur built five place twin jet. Construction was composite FRP, powered by two modified turbojet engines that are reported to be from CH-46 helicopter. Aircraft was low wing "T" tail design with conventional flight controls, cable and torque tube, conventional elevator with external trim tab trim system.

The manufacture listed the aircraft specifications on the web site as, Gross wt. 5200 lbs., empty wt. 2600 lbs., Max speed 340 kts, Stall speed 78 kts.

PILOT/OPERATOR:

Mr. Jack Walter Reed. Mr. Reed was the holder of an Airline Transport Pilot certificate [REDACTED] with airplane multiengine privileges, BE-1900, CA-212, LR-JET and SA-227. Commercial privileges, airplane single engine land and sea, multiengine sea, glider and lighter-than-air free balloon.

In addition Mr. Reed held a valid flight instructor certificate as well an airframe and power plant mechanic certificate. Mr. Reed held an appropriate and current first class medical certificate. Mr. Reed listed 6000 hours of flying time reported on his last medical application.

Mr. Reed's accident and enforcement history lists one violation in the accident aircraft, one incident (landing gear problem) in the accident aircraft, and one gear-up incident in another aircraft.

Mr. Reed was a former Aviation Safety Inspector, aircarrier operations. Mr. Reed was said to be an employee of Maverick Jets at the time of the accident.

AIRPORT/WEATHER:

The accident occurred on the Melbourne Airport within the secure area on airport property. VFR weather conditions prevailed - 33011KT 10SM FEW045 05/00 A3039.

ACCIDENT SYNOPSIS:

Interviews with various witness revealed the following events leading up to and including the accident. Mr. Reed was reported to have been sick with a flu like ailment for at least a week prior to the accident. Sandy Scott [REDACTED] a pilot who was working on obtaining an LOA in the airplane, to assist Mr. Reed with flight testing reported that the day prior to the accident Mr. Reed was scheduled to fly the aircraft for testing after modification/and or repair. (The nature of the repair or modification is unknown. Maverick personnel have not been overly co-operative) Mr. Scott stated that Mr. Reed appeared so ill that he was instructed to go home.

On Friday January 24, Mr. Reed came in, in the morning and told Mr. Scott that he felt much better and would test fly the aircraft when the maintenance was completed, however he requested that Mr. Scott accompany him on the flight.

Mr. Scott reported that late in the afternoon a potential customer appeared at Atlantic Jet Center and he got involved with customer and heard the engines on the accident aircraft running but thought that Mr. Reed was just "running them up". He was unaware that the aircraft had

departed until he heard someone say the aircraft was having gear problems, and he went outside at that point.

Many witness, including Victor Miller, [REDACTED], Eric Place, same phone, J. Kuenic, [REDACTED], [REDACTED], Danny Harrison, [REDACTED], Sandy Scott, [REDACTED] and personal from the Melbourne ATCT stated that they observed the aircraft flyby the tower at low altitude, and ask the tower to check the position of the landing gear.

The first circuit the gear was partially extended, on the second pass the gear appeared to be fully retracted.

The pilot then informed the tower that he would make an intentional gear-up landing between the taxiway and the runway in the grass on runway 9L (north side of the airport). The two previous passes had been down runway 9R.

At this point the tower alerted the emergency equipment, and they began to proceed to runway 9L.

The aircraft at this point apparently overshot the intended point of landing wide to the right. The aircraft was observed at an altitude below the height of the control tower in the vicinity of the JSTARS hanger, and the tower controller reported that he thought the aircraft would "hit the 707".

At one point the tower controller suggested that the aircraft "pull up" because he thought he was going to hit the VOR located at the east end of the field between the two runways.

All witness interviewed agreed that the aircraft was never higher than 200 to 300 feet and more like "tree top level" most of the time that it was in view and that it was pitching and banking very steeply in turns.

An unidentified UPS driver reported to the Melbourne airport police that on one circuit the aircraft passed over his delivery truck on Sarno road, about a mile north of the airport, at approximately 50 feet.

On the final circuit the aircraft reported that he was having trim problems, and that he would now land on the runway 9L. This would require as on the previous approach a base leg to final turn with a reported 11 knot tail wind on the base leg.

At this point the aircraft was so low that none of the witness could see it due to the fact that hangers and tree lines obscured their view, with the exception of the personal in the ATCT.

As the aircraft approached the base leg to final turn the tower operator, momentarily diverted his attention away from the aircraft to clear the fire equipment across the active runway. When he looked up the aircraft was gone and smoke was rising from the crash site. No one has been located who actually say the aircraft go down.

OBSERVATIONS AT THE ACCIDENT SIGHT:

The aircraft was found inverted with the tail of the aircraft oriented in the direction of flight. The damaged tree path indicated that the aircraft had come down through the trees in about a 90 degree bank at about a 30 to 40 degree angle of decent. The path through the trees was oriented at approximately 110 degrees. As previously noted the runway of intended landing of 090 degrees.

The cabin/cockpit area of the aircraft was found to be essentially intact as was the tail assembly and trim tab. The wing panels were destroyed and parts of them were found back along the flight path through the trees.

The left wing tip tank was located 35 feet up imbedded in a pine tree. The orientation of this structure was back in the direction that the aircraft had come, and indicates that the aircraft was inverted and traveling tail first in a "cart-wheeling" motion. The tip tank was the first item found along the debris path. The debris was approximately 40 yards in length.

The aircraft structure had been compromised to some degree by the post crash fire. However the elevator and trim tab assembly were found to be in relatively good shape and it was determined that the control linkage was intact and the trim tab position was in the center, indicating a neutral trim setting.

There was pre-crash damage to the landing gear doors at the inboard hinge assembly point of both of the fairing doors. The actuator mechanism was found protruding outward which caused the forward one half of the hinge and door to be detached from the aircraft structure. It is unknown if this would have affected the flight characteristics of the aircraft.

The pilot apparently survived the initial impact of the crash as he was found 26 feet from the aircraft, and the door latch had been opened and the seatbelt was not broken but had been either not worn or had been released. In addition the area beneath the body had been totally involved in the fire, indicating that it was burned prior to the body reaching that spot.

CONCLUSION/OBSERVATIONS:

The NTSB is responsible for determining the cause of accidents.

The pilot mentioned a trim problem, and it is known as fact that there was a landing gear problem.

The pilot did not mention any problems related to the engines or any other aircraft systems.

All witness agree that the aircraft made two circuits of the pattern after the flybys to determine the position and condition of the landing gear. All witness agree that these two circuits were made at a very low altitude and with some degree of pitching and very steep banks.

Indications at the crash sight indicated that the trim system was attached and connected to its control mechanism.

The orientation of the aircraft and its parts, and the path through the trees indicate that the aircraft was out of control when it made contact with trees.

Five pilots who had previously flown with the pilot came forward, to relate previous flights with him. One stated that he had trained with the pilot for a month at Embry Riddle in a Beech 1900 simulator and found him to be a competent pilot.

Two pilots who had flown with him in a governmental aircraft program stated that they had vowed never to fly with him again. When questioned about the reason, they stated that he was "very rough" with the controls, and one of them stated that he was forced to intervene on the flight controls to avoid an accident. Another pilot in the same program stated that while flying an argument in the cockpit developed over the pilot's rough handling of the flight controls.

One pilot who had flown with the pilot in the accident aircraft stated that the pilot "manhandled" the airplane, scared him, and that he was reluctant to fly with him again. This airman was a witness and remarked that he was sure that the aircraft would crash because of the low flight, pitching and steep banks near the ground.


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