



Aviation Investigation Factual Report

Location:	Blue Ridge, Georgia	Accident Number:	ERA23FA136
Date & Time:	March 5, 2023, 11:14 Local	Registration:	N3410Z
Aircraft:	Piper PA-22-150	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:	Fuel starvation	Injuries:	1 Fatal
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Instructional		

On March 5, 2023, about 1114 eastern standard time, a Piper PA-22-150, N3410Z, was substantially damaged when it was involved in an accident near Blue Ridge, Georgia. The private pilot was fatally injured. The airplane was operated as a Title 14 *Code of Federal Regulations* Part 91 personal flight.

According to a witness, who was the pilot's flight instructor, on the day of the accident, the pilot planned to conduct some airport traffic pattern work. This was the first flight of the day for the pilot and the second time he departed from Blue Ridge Skyport Airport (57GA), Blue Ridge, Georgia. The flight instructor stated that he had been working with the pilot for a couple of months "to get him back up to speed with his flying." He said the pilot had not flown in many years and was working toward a flight review signed off. The flight instructor stated, "57GA was a difficult airport to land at," and the routine was for the pilot to take off from 57GA to conduct pattern work and land at Martin Campbell Field Airport (1A3), Copperhill, Tennessee. The flight instructor would then drive over to 1A3 to meet the pilot and fly the airplane back to 57GA.

The flight instructor stated that he had provided 3.9 hours of instruction to the pilot before the accident occurred. On the day of the accident, the flight instructor said that the pilot took off from runway 18 and climbed to an altitude of about 200 ft. During the climb out the flight instructor said the airplane engine sounded as though it was losing power. He watched as the airplane made a left turn toward a field before the airplane descended and collided with a tree. He ran to the end of the runway and observed the airplane suspended in a tree and contacted the local authorities.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	65, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	3-point
Instrument Rating(s):	None	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	Yes
Medical Certification:	Class 3 None	Last FAA Medical Exam:	February 14, 2022
Occupational Pilot:	No	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	March 4, 2023
Flight Time:	(Estimated) 151 hours (Total, all aircraft), 97 hours (Total, this make and model), 7 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft)		

A review of the pilot's logbook records revealed that the pilot had a total of 151 flight hours. Further review showed that from years 1988 to 1990, the pilot accumulated a total of 90 flight hours in the PA-22. The pilot's logbook showed a total of 7 flight hours in 2023 (all in the accident airplane make and model).

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Piper	Registration:	N3410Z
Model/Series:	PA-22-150	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:	1960	Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	22-7309
Landing Gear Type:	Tricycle	Seats:	4
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	March 4, 2022 100 hour	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	2000 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	3865 Hrs as of last inspection	Engine Manufacturer:	Lycoming
ELT:	C91 installed, not activated	Engine Model/Series:	O-320-A2B
Registered Owner:	On file	Rated Power:	150 Horsepower
Operator:	On file	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	DZJ,1909 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	20 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	11:15 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	90°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	7 knots / None	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	None / None
Wind Direction:	90°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	N/A / N/A
Altimeter Setting:	30.24 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	16°C / 1°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Blue Ridge, GA	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	Blue Ridge, GA	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:		Type of Airspace:	Class G

Airport Information

Airport:	BLUE RIDGE SKYPORT 57GA	Runway Surface Type:	Asphalt
Airport Elevation:	1946 ft msl	Runway Surface Condition:	Dry
Runway Used:	18	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:	3100 ft / 100 ft	VFR Approach/Landing:	Forced landing

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Fatal	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:		Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 Fatal	Latitude, Longitude:	34.852222,-84.383056(est)

The wreckage was located about 500 ft to the left of the departure end of runway 18 at 57GA and was removed from the tree for examination. All flight control surfaces were impact-damaged and still attached to the airframe. The flight controls inside of the cockpit were impact damaged. Flight control cable continuity to the flight control surfaces was established.

The engine separated from the airframe and was located about 30 ft in front of the fuselage. The cockpit engine controls were impact damaged. An unquantified amount of fuel was observed leaking from both fuel tanks. The fuel system sustained impact damage; however, the fuel caps were found to be securely locked. Recovery personnel drained several gallons of fuel from both tanks after removing the wings from the fuselage. No fuel was present in the broken lines from the fuel pump to the carburetor. The fuel strainer was opened, and the screen was clean and unobstructed. The lever-action pump operated normally when manually activated.

Photos taken by first responders showed the fuel selector positioned between the "Right" tank and "Both" tank positions. According to the fuel selector's manufacturer, if the selector is in the 45° position, it will shut off fuel flow. Inspection of the fuel selector revealed no anomalies that would prevent normal operation. The pilot's instructor reported the fuel selector was located by the pilot's leg and that, due to the pilot's size, his leg rested on the selector.

Medical and Pathological Information

An autopsy of the pilot was performed by The Georgia Bureau of Investigation, State of Georgia, Office of the Medical Examiner. According to the autopsy report, the cause of death was blunt force injuries, and the manner of death was accident.

Toxicology testing performed at the FAA Forensic Sciences Laboratory found no drugs of abuse.

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Alleyne, Eric
Additional Participating Persons:	James Childers; Lycoming Engines; Williamsport, PA Jonathon Hirsch; Piper; Vero Beach, FL James D Nicols; FAA/FSDO; Atlanta, GA
Report Date:	
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class 3
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=106817

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