

Aviation Investigation Factual Report

Location:	Pinconning, Michigan	Accident Number:	CEN12LA197
Date & Time:	March 21, 2012, 19:16 Local	Registration:	N2389P
Aircraft:	Piper PA-22-150	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:	Controlled flight into terr/obj (CFIT)	Injuries:	1 Serious
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Factual Information

On March 21, 2012, at 1916 eastern daylight time, a Piper PA-22-150 airplane, N2389P, was substantially damaged while landing at Gross Airport (52I), Pinconning, Michigan. The pilot sustained serious injuries. The airplane was registered to and operated by a private individual, under the provisions of 14 Code of Federal Regulations Part 91 without a flight plan. Day visual meteorological conditions prevailed for the personal flight. The flight departed James Clements Municipal Airport (3CM), Bay City, Michigan, about 1858 with 52I as the intended destination.

The pilot reported that he entered the traffic pattern for runway 27 (2,565 feet by 100 feet, grass/turf) on a left downwind. After turning onto final approach, he encountered an "intense glare" from the setting sun in the west, which obscured his view of the runway and the threshold markers. He stated that after he had verified that the airplane was properly aligned with the runway there was insufficient runway remaining to make a safe landing. He performed a go-around and reentered the traffic pattern. During the go-around he put-on his sunglasses and installed a windshield sun-screen in an attempt to reduce the glare of the sun.

The pilot reported that although the glare was reduced during his second landing approach, he still could not identify the runway or the threshold markers. He aligned the airplane with what he thought was the runway and continued to descend until he unexpectedly saw trees ahead of the airplane's flight path. He immediately applied full engine power, but the airplane impacted the trees and then the ground. The pilot noted that there were no preimpact mechanical malfunctions or failures that would have precluded normal operation of the airplane.

The airport manager reported that his attention was drawn to the airplane when he heard the engine suddenly power up during final approach. Although he did not recall seeing the airplane impact trees, he did witness the airplane crash in the residential property located immediately north of the airport. He noted that after the accident the pilot told him that the glare of the setting sun obscured his vision during his initial landing approach, requiring a go-around and reentering the traffic pattern.

An on-site examination was completed by inspectors with the Federal Aviation Administration. Their examination revealed that the airplane had collided with trees before encountering a north/south power line that ran parallel to a nearby road. Several broken tree branches were found on the ground between the tree line and the main wreckage. Tree bark material was found embedded in the outboard portion of the left wing leading edge. A portion of the power/utility line was found wrapped around the upper portion vertical stabilizer and rudder. The observed wreckage debris path was consistent with the airplane traveling westbound when it collided with the obstacles. A global positioning system (GPS) handheld device was found at the accident site. The plotted GPS data was consistent with the pilot and airport manager descriptions of the accident flight path. The data confirmed that the pilot had made two approaches to runway 27. The first approach was roughly aligned with the northern edge of the runway. The second approach was aligned about 300 feet north of the runway.

The closest weather observing station was at Jack Barstow Airport (KIKW), located about 18 miles southwest of the accident site. At 1914, the KIKW automated surface observing system reported the following weather conditions: wind 220 degrees at 6 knots; visibility 10 miles; scattered clouds at 8,000 feet above ground level; temperature 29 degrees Celsius; dew point 10 degrees Celsius; altimeter setting 30.06 inches of mercury.

Astronomical data obtained from the United States Naval Observatory indicated that the local sunset was at 1950, about 34 minutes after the accident. The end of civil twilight was listed at 2019.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	68,Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	None	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 3 With waivers/limitations	Last FAA Medical Exam:	April 23, 2010
Occupational Pilot:	No	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	September 11, 2011
Flight Time:	697 hours (Total, all aircraft), 22 hours (Total, this make and model), 8 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 3 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 0 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

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Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Piper	Registration:	N2389P
Model/Series:	PA-22-150	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	22-2780
Landing Gear Type:	Tricycle	Seats:	4
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	October 11, 2011 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	2000 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	25 Hrs	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	3271 Hrs at time of accident	Engine Manufacturer:	Lycoming
ELT:	C91 installed, not activated	Engine Model/Series:	0-320-A2A
Registered Owner:	Gerald Walter Pergande	Rated Power:	150 Horsepower
Operator:	Gerald Walter Pergande	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	KIKW,635 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	15 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	19:14 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	232°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Scattered / 8000 ft AGL	Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	6 knots / None	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	220°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30.05 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	29°C / 10°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Bay City, MI (3CM)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	Pinconning, MI (52I)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	18:58 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Airport Information

Airport:	Gross Airport 52I	Runway Surface Type:	Grass/turf
Airport Elevation:	615 ft msl	Runway Surface Condition:	Dry
Runway Used:	27	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:	2565 ft / 100 ft	VFR Approach/Landing:	Traffic pattern

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Serious	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:		Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 Serious	Latitude, Longitude:	43.846942,-84.01139(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Fox, Andrew
Additional Participating Persons:	Marc R Webber; Federal Aviation Administration, Grand Rapids FSDO; Grand Rapids, MI
Report Date:	August 1, 2012
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	<u>Class</u>
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=83189

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The NTSB does not assign fault or blame for an accident or incident; rather, as specified by NTSB regulation, "accident/incident investigations are fact-finding proceedings with no formal issues and no adverse parties ... and are not conducted for the purpose of determining the rights or liabilities of any person" (Title 49 *Code of Federal Regulations* section 831.4). Assignment of fault or legal liability is not relevant to the NTSB's statutory mission to improve transportation safety by investigating accidents and incidents and issuing safety recommendations. In addition, statutory language prohibits the admission into evidence or use of any part of an NTSB report related to an accident in a civil action for damages resulting from a matter mentioned in the report (Title 49 *United States Code* section 1154(b)). A factual report that may be admissible under 49 *United States Code* section 1154(b) is available <u>here</u>.