



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Caldwell, New Jersey	Accident Number:	ERA22LA414
Date & Time:	September 9, 2022, 11:32 Local	Registration:	N8925Y
Aircraft:	Piper PA-39	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:	Medical event	Injuries:	2 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The 84-year-old pilot and the passenger made two attempts to take off on a cross-country flight. According to the passenger, once she and the pilot boarded the airplane, the pilot said he forgot where they were going and had to ask the name of the airport. After informing the pilot of their destination, the pilot taxied to the runway and began to accelerate for takeoff. The pilot aborted the takeoff because he thought the passenger’s door was open. The door was secured, and the pilot taxied back to the runway. Just before taking off again, the pilot asked a second time where they were going. The passenger again had to tell the pilot their destination. The pilot initiated the takeoff roll, but aborted because he felt something was wrong with the airplane. The airplane went off the end of the runway, resulting in substantial damage to the left wing.

When first responders arrived on scene, they noted the pilot was confused and had memory problems. The pilot was hospitalized for neurological evaluation and consultation. Magnetic resonance imaging of the pilot’s brain performed the day after the accident demonstrated an acute-to-subacute lacunar stroke in the right medial temporal lobe. The pilot was discharged from the hospital with a diagnosis of transient global amnesia. As such, the pilot most likely experienced an acute cerebrovascular event. Impairing symptoms of this event likely diminished his situational awareness and prompted him to intentionally abort the takeoff, resulting in the runway excursion.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be:

The pilot's acute cerebrovascular event, which caused symptoms that diminished his situational awareness and prompted him to abort the takeoff, resulting in a runway excursion.

Findings

Personnel issues

Neurological - Pilot

Factual Information

History of Flight

Takeoff-rejected takeoff	Medical event (Defining event)
Takeoff-rejected takeoff	Runway excursion

On September 9, 2022, at 1132 eastern daylight time, N8925Y, a twin-engine Piper PA-39 airplane was substantially damaged when it was involved in an accident at the Essex County Airport (CDW), Caldwell, New Jersey. The pilot and the passenger were not injured. The airplane was being operated as a Title 14 *Code of Federal Regulations* Part 91 personal flight.

According to the passenger, she and the pilot were flying to Maine to visit friends. They arrived at CDW around 1000. Once she and the pilot boarded the airplane, the pilot said he forgot where they were going and had to ask the name of the airport. After informing the pilot of their destination, the pilot taxied to the runway and began to accelerate for takeoff. The pilot aborted the takeoff because he thought the passenger's door was open. The door was secured, and the pilot taxied back to the runway. Just before taking off again, the pilot asked for the second time where they were going. The passenger said she again had to tell the pilot their destination. The pilot initiated the takeoff roll but aborted because he felt something was wrong with the airplane. The passenger said the pilot shut off both engines and "locked up" the brakes, but the airplane went off the runway into the grass. The airplane swerved right and came to rest upright. The left main landing gear collapsed, and the left wing was substantially damaged.

The pilot stated that he did not recall any details of the accident. He could only remember pulling the airplane out of the hangar before the flight, then later being in the hospital.

The 84-year-old male pilot's most recent aviation medical examination before the accident was on October 4, 2021. At that time, he reported a medical history including chronic lymphocytic leukemia (CLL) in remission. His reported medications did not include any medications that are generally considered impairing. The Aviation Medical Examiner issued the pilot a third-class medical certificate, in accordance with an FAA Authorization for Special Issuance for CLL. The medical certificate was limited by a requirement to wear corrective lenses and carried a time limitation, which had not expired as of the crash date. In July 2022, the pilot submitted additional reports to the FAA indicating that his CLL remained in remission.

Following the accident, when first responders arrived at the accident scene, they noted that the pilot seemed confused and had memory problems. The pilot was hospitalized for neurological evaluation and consultation. Magnetic resonance imaging of the pilot's brain performed the day after the accident demonstrated an acute-to-subacute lacunar stroke in the right medial

temporal lobe. The pilot was discharged from the hospital the day after the accident with a diagnosis of transient global amnesia.

The 84-year-old pilot said that he did not recall any details of the accident. He could only remember pulling the airplane out of the hangar before the flight, then later being in the hospital.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial; Private	Age:	84, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land; Single-engine sea; Multi-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	Glider; Helicopter	Restraint Used:	3-point
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	
Medical Certification:	Class 3 With waivers/limitations	Last FAA Medical Exam:	October 4, 2021
Occupational Pilot:	No	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	October 9, 2021
Flight Time:	2186 hours (Total, all aircraft), 915 hours (Total, this make and model), 1891 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 17 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 8 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Piper	Registration:	N8925Y
Model/Series:	PA-39	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:	1970	Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	39-81
Landing Gear Type:	Retractable - Tricycle	Seats:	6
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	March 17, 2022 100 hour	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	3600 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	2 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	4333.6 Hrs at time of accident	Engine Manufacturer:	Lycoming
ELT:	C91A installed, not activated	Engine Model/Series:	IO-320-B1A
Registered Owner:	On file	Rated Power:	160
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:	KCDW, 172 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	0 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	11:53 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	0°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	/	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	None / None
Wind Direction:		Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	N/A / N/A
Altimeter Setting:	30.1 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	25°C / 10°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Caldwell, NJ	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	IFR
Destination:	Fryeburg, ME (IZG)	Type of Clearance:	IFR
Departure Time:		Type of Airspace:	Class D

Airport Information

Airport:	ESSEX COUNTY CDW	Runway Surface Type:	Asphalt
Airport Elevation:	172 ft msl	Runway Surface Condition:	Dry
Runway Used:	4	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:	4552 ft / 80 ft	VFR Approach/Landing:	None

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	2 None	Latitude, Longitude:	40.875225,-74.28135

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Read, Leah
Additional Participating Persons:	Vincent Bellini; FAA/FSDO; Teterboro, NJ
Original Publish Date:	May 16, 2024
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class 3
Note:	The NTSB did not travel to the scene of this accident.
Investigation Docket:	https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=105928

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) is an independent federal agency charged by Congress with investigating every civil aviation accident in the United States and significant events in other modes of transportation—railroad, transit, highway, marine, pipeline, and commercial space. We determine the probable causes of the accidents and events we investigate, and issue safety recommendations aimed at preventing future occurrences. In addition, we conduct transportation safety research studies and offer information and other assistance to family members and survivors for each accident or event we investigate. We also serve as the appellate authority for enforcement actions involving aviation and mariner certificates issued by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and US Coast Guard, and we adjudicate appeals of civil penalty actions taken by the FAA.

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 [here](#).