



# Aviation Investigation Final Report

<b>Location:</b>	ALBION, Michigan	<b>Accident Number:</b>	CHI98LA200
<b>Date &amp; Time:</b>	June 13, 1998, 16:50 Local	<b>Registration:</b>	N4617P
<b>Aircraft:</b>	Piper PA-23-250	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Substantial
<b>Defining Event:</b>		<b>Injuries:</b>	1 Serious, 1 Minor
<b>Flight Conducted Under:</b>	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

## Analysis

The twin engine airplane suffered a loss of right engine power in cruise flight about 10 minutes after takeoff.. The pilot, who held a student pilot certificate, said he was unable to maintain flight and a forced landing was initiated. On approach, the airplane impacted trees, departed controlled flight and impacted the terrain. A post accident fire ignited. The pilot told an FAA inspector that the loss of power was due to fuel exhaustion. An inspection of the airplane revealed that there was only unusable fuel remaining in the right wing. It was also found that the right engine propeller was not feathered.

## Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: the pilot's improper preflight planning/preparation and his not refueling the airplane to avoid fuel exhaustion. Factors were the pilot's lack of certification, his not feathering the engine, and the trees.

## Findings

Occurrence #1: LOSS OF ENGINE POWER(TOTAL) - NONMECHANICAL  
Phase of Operation: CRUISE

### Findings

1. (F) 1 ENGINE
2. (F) FLUID,FUEL - EXHAUSTION

3. (C) PREFLIGHT PLANNING/PREPARATION - IMPROPER - PILOT IN COMMAND

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Occurrence #2: FORCED LANDING

Phase of Operation: DESCENT - EMERGENCY

Findings

4. (F) PROPELLER FEATHERING - NOT PERFORMED - PILOT IN COMMAND

5. (F) LACK OF CERTIFICATION - PILOT IN COMMAND

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Occurrence #3: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH OBJECT

Phase of Operation: DESCENT - EMERGENCY

Findings

6. (F) OBJECT - TREE(S)

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Occurrence #4: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER

Phase of Operation: DESCENT - UNCONTROLLED

## Factual Information

On June 13, 1998, at 1650 eastern daylight time, a Piper PA-23-250, N4617P, operated by a student pilot, sustained substantial damage from impact with trees, the terrain, and a post impact fire, during a forced landing 12 miles north of Albion, Michigan. The pilot received minor injuries, while his passenger sustained serious injuries. The pilot said that the right engine suffered a loss of power, and he was attempting a forced landing in a field when the airplane impacted tree tops. The personal 14 CFR Part 91 flight was operating in visual meteorological conditions. No flight plan was on file. The local flight departed Marshall, Michigan, about 1640.

The student pilot told a Federal Aviation Administration inspector that the loss of right engine power was due to fuel exhaustion. He said that he was unable to maintain flight and initiated a forced landing.

A post accident examination of the airplane found that the left wing was destroyed by impact and a post accident fire. The right wing fuel tanks were intact and contained only unusable fuel. Both the right and left engine fuel selectors were found in the off position. The right propeller was not feathered.

Logbooks for the airplane and engines were examined where it was determined the most recent annual inspection was conducted on October 18, 1996.

Several attempts were made to contact the pilot and have him complete an NTSB Form 6120.1/2 "Pilot/Operator Aircraft Accident Report." On contacting the Calhoun County (MI), Sheriff's Department on September 11, 1998, it was determined the pilot died on September 5, 1998. The cause of his death was not related to the airplane accident according the Calhoun County (MI) Sheriff's Department.

## Pilot Information

<b>Certificate:</b>	Student	<b>Age:</b>	56, Male
<b>Airplane Rating(s):</b>	None	<b>Seat Occupied:</b>	Left
<b>Other Aircraft Rating(s):</b>	None	<b>Restraint Used:</b>	
<b>Instrument Rating(s):</b>	None	<b>Second Pilot Present:</b>	No
<b>Instructor Rating(s):</b>	None	<b>Toxicology Performed:</b>	No
<b>Medical Certification:</b>	Class 3 Valid Medical-w/ waivers/lim	<b>Last FAA Medical Exam:</b>	July 21, 1997
<b>Occupational Pilot:</b>	UNK	<b>Last Flight Review or Equivalent:</b>	
<b>Flight Time:</b>			

## Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

<b>Aircraft Make:</b>	Piper	<b>Registration:</b>	N4617P
<b>Model/Series:</b>	PA-23-250 PA-23-250	<b>Aircraft Category:</b>	Airplane
<b>Year of Manufacture:</b>		<b>Amateur Built:</b>	
<b>Airworthiness Certificate:</b>	Normal	<b>Serial Number:</b>	27-131
<b>Landing Gear Type:</b>	Retractable - Tricycle	<b>Seats:</b>	6
<b>Date/Type of Last Inspection:</b>	October 18, 1996 Annual	<b>Certified Max Gross Wt.:</b>	4800 lbs
<b>Time Since Last Inspection:</b>		<b>Engines:</b>	2 Reciprocating
<b>Airframe Total Time:</b>		<b>Engine Manufacturer:</b>	Lycoming
<b>ELT:</b>		<b>Engine Model/Series:</b>	O-540-A1B5
<b>Registered Owner:</b>	MYER J. FRANKLIN	<b>Rated Power:</b>	250 Horsepower
<b>Operator:</b>		<b>Operating Certificate(s) Held:</b>	None
<b>Operator Does Business As:</b>		<b>Operator Designator Code:</b>	

## Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

<b>Conditions at Accident Site:</b>	Visual (VMC)	<b>Condition of Light:</b>	Day
<b>Observation Facility, Elevation:</b>	BTL ,952 ft msl	<b>Distance from Accident Site:</b>	24 Nautical Miles
<b>Observation Time:</b>	16:53 Local	<b>Direction from Accident Site:</b>	250°
<b>Lowest Cloud Condition:</b>	Clear	<b>Visibility</b>	10 miles
<b>Lowest Ceiling:</b>	None	<b>Visibility (RVR):</b>	
<b>Wind Speed/Gusts:</b>	13 knots /	<b>Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:</b>	/
<b>Wind Direction:</b>	310°	<b>Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:</b>	/
<b>Altimeter Setting:</b>	29 inches Hg	<b>Temperature/Dew Point:</b>	22°C / 14°C
<b>Precipitation and Obscuration:</b>	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
<b>Departure Point:</b>	MARSHALL , MI (RMY )	<b>Type of Flight Plan Filed:</b>	None
<b>Destination:</b>		<b>Type of Clearance:</b>	None
<b>Departure Time:</b>	16:40 Local	<b>Type of Airspace:</b>	Class G

## Airport Information

<b>Airport:</b>		<b>Runway Surface Type:</b>	
<b>Airport Elevation:</b>		<b>Runway Surface Condition:</b>	
<b>Runway Used:</b>	0	<b>IFR Approach:</b>	
<b>Runway Length/Width:</b>		<b>VFR Approach/Landing:</b>	Forced landing

## Wreckage and Impact Information

<b>Crew Injuries:</b>	1 Minor	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Substantial
<b>Passenger Injuries:</b>	1 Serious	<b>Aircraft Fire:</b>	On-ground
<b>Ground Injuries:</b>	N/A	<b>Aircraft Explosion:</b>	None
<b>Total Injuries:</b>	1 Serious, 1 Minor	<b>Latitude, Longitude:</b>	42.239517,-84.749145(est)

## Administrative Information

<b>Investigator In Charge (IIC):</b>	Wilson, Stephen
<b>Additional Participating Persons:</b>	WOODY BEST; GRAND RAPIDS , MI
<b>Original Publish Date:</b>	January 28, 2000
<b>Last Revision Date:</b>	
<b>Investigation Class:</b>	<a href="#">Class</a>
<b>Note:</b>	
<b>Investigation Docket:</b>	<a href="https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=10915">https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=10915</a>

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