



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	SPANISHBURG, West Virginia	Accident Number:	BF092LA007
Date & Time:	November 16, 1991, 18:00 Local	Registration:	N97684
Aircraft:	STINSON 108	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Defining Event:		Injuries:	1 Serious, 1 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

DURING A CROSS COUNTRY FLIGHT FROM MYRTLE BEACH, SOUTH CAROLINA TO CLARKSBURG, WEST VIRGINIA, THE NON-INSTRUMENT RATED PRIVATE PILOT DESCENDED THROUGH AN OVERCAST AND COLLIDED WITH TREES. THE PILOT STATED THAT HE HAD OBTAINED A COMPUTER RADAR WEATHER REPORT IN STATESVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA, WHICH WAS REPORTING 4500 FEET CEILING AND 20 MILES VISIBILITY. ACCORDING TO THE FAA, WHILE EN ROUTE TO HIS DESTINATION, THE PILOT CLIMBED AS HIGH AS 9000 FEET TO AVOID THE CLOUDS. AFTER CROSSING THE FIRST MOUNTAIN RIDGE, HE DESCENDED TO 500 FEET. HE STATED THAT HE SLOWED THE AIRCRAFT TO 70 KNOTS AND CONTINUED HIS DESCENT SO AS TO REGAIN SIGHT OF THE GROUND. THE NEAREST WEATHER STATION, ABOUT 10 MILES AWAY, REPORTED THE WEATHER AS OBSCURED SKY AND ONE-EIGHT OF A MILE VISIBILITY IN LIGHT DRIZZLE AND FOG.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: THE PILOT'S INTENTIONAL FLIGHT INTO INSTRUMENT METEOROLOGICAL CONDITIONS. CONTRIBUTING TO THE ACCIDENT WAS THE LOW CEILING IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE MOUNTAINOUS TERRAIN AND THE PILOT'S OVER CONFIDENCE.

Findings

Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT ENCOUNTER WITH WEATHER
Phase of Operation: DESCENT - NORMAL

Findings

1. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - LOW CEILING
2. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - FOG
3. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - DRIZZLE/MIST
4. (C) VFR FLIGHT INTO IMC - INTENTIONAL - PILOT IN COMMAND
5. (F) OVERCONFIDENCE IN PERSONAL ABILITY - PILOT IN COMMAND

Occurrence #2: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER

Phase of Operation: DESCENT - NORMAL

Findings

6. (F) TERRAIN CONDITION - MOUNTAINOUS/HILLY
7. (F) OBJECT - TREE(S)

Factual Information

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	46, 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 Invalid Medical for flight	Last FAA Medical Exam:	June 29, 1988
Occupational Pilot:	UNK	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	172 hours (Total, all aircraft), 112 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 4 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 1 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	STINSON	Registration:	N97684
Model/Series:	108 108	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal; Utility	Serial Number:	108-684
Landing Gear Type:	Tailwheel	Seats:	4
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	October 24, 1901 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	2150 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	10 Hrs	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:		Engine Manufacturer:	FRANKLIN
ELT:		Engine Model/Series:	6A4150-3
Registered Owner:	RICHARD SMITH	Rated Power:	150 Horsepower
Operator:	LARRY D. MISENHELDER	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None
Operator Does Business As:		Operator Designator Code:	

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Instrument (IMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	BLF ,2857 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	10 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	17:55 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	190°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Unknown	Visibility	
Lowest Ceiling:	100 ft AGL	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	4 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	250°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	11°C / 11°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	N/A - None - Fog		
Departure Point:	STATESVILLE , NC	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	MERCER COUNTY , WV	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	17:00 Local	Type of Airspace:	

Airport Information

Airport:		Runway Surface Type:	
Airport Elevation:		Runway Surface Condition:	
Runway Used:	0	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:		VFR Approach/Landing:	None

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Passenger Injuries:	1 Serious	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 Serious, 1 None	Latitude, Longitude:	37.449138,-81.109764(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Johnson, Beverly
Additional Participating Persons:	JOHN HOGAN; CHARLESTON , WV
Original Publish Date:	April 8, 1993
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=11749

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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 [here](#).