



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	OPHEIM, Montana	Accident Number:	DEN87LA030
Date & Time:	December 15, 1986, 12:00 Local	Registration:	N78588
Aircraft:	PIPER PA-12	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	1 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

THE PLT ELECTED TO TAKE OFF DOWNHILL BECAUSE HE SAID THE HILL WAS TOO STEEP TO TRY A TAKEOFF UPHILL EVEN INTO THE WIND. HE SAID THAT JUST PRIOR TO LIFT OFF, HE HIT A SNOWBANK WHICH SLOWED THE ACFT DOWN. DEEPER SNOW WAS THEN CONTACTED AND THE ACFT FLIPPED OVER.

Probable Cause and Findings

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

Findings

Occurrence #1: ON GROUND/WATER ENCOUNTER WITH TERRAIN/WATER
Phase of Operation: TAKEOFF - ROLL/RUN

Findings

1. (C) TERRAIN CONDITION - SNOWBANK
2. (F) TERRAIN CONDITION - DOWNHILL
3. (C) UNSUITABLE TERRAIN OR TAKEOFF/LANDING/TAXI AREA - SELECTED - PILOT IN COMMAND
4. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - TAILWIND
5. (C) PLANNING/DECISION - IMPROPER - PILOT IN COMMAND

Occurrence #2: NOSE OVER
Phase of Operation: TAKEOFF - ROLL/RUN

Factual Information

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial	Age:	34, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Front
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 2 Valid Medical--no waivers/lim.	Last FAA Medical Exam:	November 3, 1986
Occupational Pilot:	Yes	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	4150 hours (Total, all aircraft), 200 hours (Total, this make and model), 4000 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 70 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 2 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	PIPER	Registration:	N78588
Model/Series:	PA-12 PA-12	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	12-3957
Landing Gear Type:	Tailwheel	Seats:	2
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	January 12, 1986 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	1625 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	30 Hrs	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	3049 Hrs	Engine Manufacturer:	LYCOMING
ELT:	Installed, activated, did not aid in locating accident	Engine Model/Series:	O-320-E2D
Registered Owner:	CHARLES TMOYTHY TROWER	Rated Power:	150 Horsepower
Operator:		Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None
Operator Does Business As:		Operator Designator Code:	

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:		Distance from Accident Site:	
Observation Time:		Direction from Accident Site:	
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Visibility	40 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	5 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	180°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	29 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	-1°C / -4°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	SCOBEEY, MT	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:		Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	12:00 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Airport Information

Airport:		Runway Surface Type:	Grass/turf
Airport Elevation:	0 ft msl	Runway Surface Condition:	Snow
Runway Used:	0	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:	0 ft / 0 ft	VFR Approach/Landing:	None

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:		Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 None	Latitude, Longitude:	48.780715,-105.599136(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC): Tranter, Verlin

Additional Participating Persons: DENNY BRIDGES; HELENA , MT

Original Publish Date:

Last Revision Date:

Investigation Class: [Class](#)

Note:

Investigation Docket: <https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=17158>

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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](#).