



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	PLAINVIEW, Texas	Accident Number:	FTW97LA040
Date & Time:	November 12, 1996, 23:05 Local	Registration:	N5443
Aircraft:	Piper PA-23-250	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	1 Minor
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation		

Analysis

The pilot initially requested and was assigned 8,000 feet, and was later issued 10,000 feet as a final altitude assignment for the en route portion of his instrument flight to the Hale County Airport. As the airplane approached the Plainview VOR, the pilot was cleared by ATC for the published VOR approach to runway 04, and he was twice issued the current Lubbock altimeter as 30.42 inches. The airplane, configured with the landing gear extended, touched down on the runway's extended centerline, approximately 3/4 of a mile from the landing threshold for runway 04. Examination of the airplane revealed that the pilot's altimeter was set on 30.67 inches. The minimum descent altitude for the approach was 3,840 feet, and the field elevation was 3,372 feet. The top of the fog was reported at 4,200 feet.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: the pilot's continued descent below the minimum descent altitude (MDA). Factors relating to the accident were: darkness, the adverse weather conditions.

Findings

Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER
Phase of Operation: APPROACH - FAF/OUTER MARKER TO THRESHOLD (IFR)

- Findings
1. (F) LIGHT CONDITION - DARK NIGHT

2. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - FOG
3. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - DRIZZLE/MIST
4. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - BELOW APPROACH/LANDING MINIMUMS
5. ALTIMETER SETTING - IMPROPER - PILOT IN COMMAND
6. (C) MINIMUM DESCENT ALTITUDE - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND

Factual Information

On November 12, 1996, at 2305 central standard time, a Piper PA-23-250 airplane, N5443, was substantially damaged upon impact with terrain while on an instrument approach near Plainview, Texas. The instrument rated private pilot, sole occupant of the twin engine aircraft, sustained minor injuries. The airplane was owned and operated by the Wayland Baptist University of Plainview, Texas, under Title 14 CFR Part 91. Instrument meteorological conditions prevailed for the night business flight for which a weather briefing was received and an instrument flight plan filed. The flight departed from the Meacham Airport near Fort Worth, Texas, at 2100.

The pilot stated that on his last weather check prior to departing Fort Worth, the weather for Lubbock, Texas, which is the closest weather reporting station to his destination airport, was reporting a 900 foot ceiling with 3 miles visibility. He added that the Midland International Airport was reporting clear skies, and he selected it as his alternate airport.

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In the enclosed narrative portion of the NTSB Form 6120.1/2, the pilot stated his intentions were "to descend to minimums and if [the} airport was not visible, to do a missed approach to LBB [Lubbock] or Midland." The pilot added that "his last recollection was approaching MDA."

Examination of the airplane by an FAA inspector revealed that airframe structural damage was incurred when the landing gear sank in the soft ground. Further examination revealed that the pilot's altimeter was found set on 30.67 inches (current was 30.42). The minimum descent altitude for the approach being flown was 3,840 feet, with a field elevation of 3,372 feet. The tops of the fog was reported at 4,200 feet.

There were no reported eyewitnesses to the accident. According to law enforcement personnel that responded to the accident, the pilot used his cellular phone to report the accident and arranged for his wife to pick him up.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	53, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land; Multi-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Left
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 3 Valid Medical--no waivers/lim.	Last FAA Medical Exam:	March 15, 1996
Occupational Pilot:	No	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	2951 hours (Total, all aircraft), 200 hours (Total, this make and model), 2834 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 66 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 22 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 4 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Piper	Registration:	N5443
Model/Series:	PA-23-250 PA-23-250	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	27-7405473
Landing Gear Type:	Retractable - Tricycle	Seats:	6
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	5200 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	2 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:		Engine Manufacturer:	Lycoming
ELT:	Installed, activated, aided in locating accident	Engine Model/Series:	TIO-540
Registered Owner:	WAYLAND BAPTIST UNIVERSITY	Rated Power:	250 Horsepower
Operator:	BILLY D. HARDAGE	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None
Operator Does Business As:	WAYLAND BAPTIST UNIVERSITY	Operator Designator Code:	

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Instrument (IMC)	Condition of Light:	Night/dark
Observation Facility, Elevation:		Distance from Accident Site:	
Observation Time:		Direction from Accident Site:	
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Unknown	Visibility	0.25 miles
Lowest Ceiling:		Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	/	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	0°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	13°C / 13°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	N/A - None - Fog		
Departure Point:	FORT WORTH , TX (FTW)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	IFR
Destination:	(PVW)	Type of Clearance:	IFR
Departure Time:	21:00 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class D

Airport Information

Airport:	HALE COUNTY PVW	Runway Surface Type:	Asphalt
Airport Elevation:	3372 ft msl	Runway Surface Condition:	
Runway Used:	4	IFR Approach:	VOR/DME
Runway Length/Width:	6000 ft / 100 ft	VFR Approach/Landing:	None

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Minor	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:		Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 Minor	Latitude, Longitude:	34.18906,-101.720947(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Casanova, Hector
Additional Participating Persons:	ROY R MOORE; LUBBOCK , TX
Original Publish Date:	February 1, 1997
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=20113

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](#).