



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	PALM SPRINGS, California	Accident Number:	LAX83LA452
Date & Time:	September 20, 1983, 09:10 Local	Registration:	N3636X
Aircraft:	AERO COMMANDER 100	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	1 Minor
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation		

Analysis

WHILE EN ROUTE, THE PLT ENCOUNTERED DETERIORATING WX. HE WAS AN INSTRUMENT PLT, BUT HAD CHOSEN NOT TO FILE & FLY UNDER IFR DUE TO TERRAIN, WX, LOW PERFORMANCE OF THE ACFT & LACK OF PITOT HEAT. THE PLT NOTED A CEILING AT 5500 FT MSL WHEN HE CROSSED BANNING PASS. HE SAW DARK CLOUDS & HEAVY RAIN IN THE PALM SPRINGS & BERMUDA DUNES AREA. THE MOUNTAINS NORTH OF DESERT HOT SPRINGS WERE COVERED WITH CLOUDS, SO HE TRIED TO GET THRU YUCCA VALLEY WHERE THE WX LOOKED BETTER. HOWEVER, LOW CEILINGS & RAIN WERE ENCOUNTERED, SO THE PLT MADE A 180 DEG TURN TO RETURN TO RIVERSIDE, CA. HE SOON ENCOUNTERED 'A FAST WESTERLY MOVING MASS OF CLOUDS THAT WENT ALL THE WAY TO THE GROUND.' DUE TO THE SPEED OF THE STORM, HE WAS FORCED TO LAND QUICKLY & ELECTED TO LAND DOWNWIND ON A ROAD. HOWEVER, OVERFLEW THE ROAD & LANDED IN A ROCKY WASH AREA, EXTENSIVELY DAMAGING THE ACFT.

Probable Cause and Findings

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

Findings

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

Findings

1. (F) TERRAIN CONDITION - HIGH TERRAIN
2. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - CLOUDS
3. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - LOW CEILING
4. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - RAIN
5. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - FOG

Occurrence #2: ON GROUND/WATER ENCOUNTER WITH TERRAIN/WATER

Phase of Operation: LANDING

Findings

6. PRECAUTIONARY LANDING - PERFORMED - PILOT IN COMMAND
7. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - TAILWIND
8. (F) TERRAIN CONDITION - ROUGH/UNEVEN

Factual Information

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial; Flight instructor	Age:	30, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land; Multi-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):		Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	Airplane single-engine	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 2 Valid Medical--no waivers/lim.	Last FAA Medical Exam:	February 9, 1983
Occupational Pilot:	UNK	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	1825 hours (Total, all aircraft), 117 hours (Total, this make and model), 1651 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 23 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	AERO COMMANDER	Registration:	N3636X
Model/Series:	100 100	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	336
Landing Gear Type:	Tricycle	Seats:	4
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	April 2, 1983 100 hour	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	2250 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	42 Hrs	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	1011 Hrs	Engine Manufacturer:	LYCOMING
ELT:	Installed	Engine Model/Series:	O-320-A2B
Registered Owner:	LAKE RANCH, INC.	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:	Unknown	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	ONT ,448 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	12 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	07:45 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	330°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Unknown	Visibility	
Lowest Ceiling:	Unknown	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	10 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	90°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	29 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	24°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	N/A - None - Fog		
Departure Point:	RIVERSIDE , CA (RAL)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	PARKER , AZ (P20)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	00:00 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:	Precautionary landing

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:	33.850299,-116.559448(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC): Dickinson, Alfred

Additional Participating Persons:

Original Publish Date:

Last Revision Date:

Investigation Class: [Class](#)

Note:

Investigation Docket: <https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=23862>

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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](#).