



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	DELTA JUNCTION, Alaska	Accident Number:	ANC94FA074
Date & Time:	June 30, 1994, 21:54 Local	Registration:	N8510C
Aircraft:	PIPER PA-22	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Defining Event:		Injuries:	3 Fatal
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

THE AIRPLANE WAS OBSERVED FLYING ABOVE THE RIVER AT A LOW ALTITUDE AND AIRSPEED. THE SOUND EMITTED FROM THE ENGINE WAS CHARACTERIZED AS 'CUTTING OUT'. THE AIRPLANE BANKED LEFT, DESCENDED RAPIDLY, AND MADE AT LEAST ONE COMPLETE TURN BEFORE IMPACTING THE WATER AND SINKING.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: THE LOSS OF ENGINE POWER FOR UNDETERMINED REASONS. A FACTOR WAS THE PILOT DID NOT MAINTAIN AIRSPEED RESULTING IN A STALL/SPIN.

Findings

Occurrence #1: LOSS OF ENGINE POWER
Phase of Operation: MANEUVERING

Findings

1. (C) REASON FOR OCCURRENCE UNDETERMINED

Occurrence #2: FORCED LANDING
Phase of Operation: DESCENT - EMERGENCY

Occurrence #3: LOSS OF CONTROL - IN FLIGHT
Phase of Operation: DESCENT - EMERGENCY

Findings

2. (C) AIRSPEED - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND
3. STALL/SPIN - INADVERTENT - PILOT IN COMMAND

Occurrence #4: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER
Phase of Operation: DESCENT - UNCONTROLLED

Factual Information

HISTORY OF FLIGHT

On June 30, 1994, at 2154 Alaska daylight time, a conventional wheel equipped Piper PA-22 airplane, N8510C, registered to and operated by the pilot-in-command, crashed in the Tanana River, approximately 1 1/2 miles downstream from the confluence of the Little Delta River near Delta Junction, Alaska. The coordinates of the accident site are North 61 degrees 17 minutes, West 146 degrees 43 minutes. The private certificated pilot and his two passengers, the sole occupants, received fatal injuries and the airplane was destroyed. The flight last departed the Big Delta airstrip, a privately owned facility, at about 2132. The pleasure flight was being conducted under 14 CFR Part 91 for the purpose of searching for a boat on the Tanana River that belonged to the pilot which had come loose from its mooring several days earlier. An eye/ear witness to the accident characterized the weather as clear with calm and/or light wind. There was no flight plan in effect.

WITNESS INFORMATION

The eye/ear witness, a former U.S. Air Force aircraft crew chief, observed the airplane from the vantage point of a gravel bar near the mouth of the Little Delta River. The airplane approached the area as if it were coming from Big Delta. The plane was heading north going down river at an altitude estimated to be 300 feet above the ground. The speed at which the plane was traveling was characterized as slow. The attitude of the airplane was characterized as nose high/tail low. The engine was cutting out like the fuel mixture was leaned too thin. The airplane banked slightly to the left then descended quickly towards the water. The plane made at least one turn before impacting the water at a steep nose low attitude and sank within a matter of seconds. State law enforcement officers arrived at the airplane about 1 1/2 hours afterwards. The airplane was found submerged, held fast by a log jam near a sand bar roughly 1 mile down stream from the point of the initial impact.

PERSONNEL INFORMATION

Stanley Baranoski, date of birth September 19, 1947, was the holder of private pilot certificate No. 31343301, issued August 24, 1985 with the limitations and privileges of airplane single engine land. His third class medical certificate issued October 16, 1992 was void of limitations. On August 29, 1992, he completed a biannual flight review (BFR) in N8510C. Entries from his personal pilot log provided by his family show that as of June 26, 1994, he had accrued 346 total flight hours of which about 242 were in the accident aircraft.

AIRCRAFT INFORMATION

Airplane N8510C, having serial number 22-1225, was manufactured in 1953. The airplane was registered to Stanley Baranoski on November 20, 1986. FAA records show no previous accident/incident history for the airplane.

No documentation or otherwise information was found that provided information on the amount of fuel on board the airplane or the manner in which the plane was loaded at the time of the accident.

The airframe and engine records were provided by the pilot's family. The only maintenance entry in the airframe log reflected a date of May 1982 for an annual inspection. Family members reported the existence of a second log but could not find it. The engine records show that the engine underwent an annual inspection on September 7, 1993. At that time the engine had accrued a total of 96 hours since major overhaul. The total engine tachometer time was 2260. On January 31, 1990, the plane's Avco Lycoming O-320 engine, SN: L-4558-27, was modified IAW STC SA1949CE for the use of auto gas. The engine records showed no recurring maintenance entries.

WRECKAGE AND IMPACT INFORMATION

The NTSB investigator-in-charge visited the wreckage site on July 14, 1994. Mr. Clifford Smart from the FAA's FSDO-01 participated in the on scene investigation. The plane was found near a log jam and sandbar about 1 mile from the point it had initially descended into the water. The depth and flow rate of the water in the immediate area was estimated to be 3 1/2 to 4 feet and from 6 to 10 knots, respectively. The plane was inverted. The lower portion of the forward fuselage, the main landing gear assembly, and one propeller blade were the central structures that protruded above the surface of the water. The propeller blade displayed no gross damage and/or deformation. Attempts at moving the wreckage with the aid of a mechanical hoist nearer to the sandbar for a closer and safer examination were not successful. Consequently, the decision was made to revisit the wreckage, which had been tied by rope to the log jam, when the depth and velocity of the river had subsided. The wreckage subsequently broke loose and despite a diligent search has not been relocated.

MEDICAL AND PATHOLOGICAL INFORMATION

The cause of death for the pilot was determined by the State of Alaska, Office of the Medical Examiner to be directly related to injuries sustained in the accident. Toxicological testing on tissue samples were negative for alcohol, major drugs of abuse, and prescription and over the counter medications.

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:	Yes
Medical Certification:	Class 3 Valid Medical—no waivers/lim.	Last FAA Medical Exam:	October 16, 1992
Occupational Pilot:	UNK	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	346 hours (Total, all aircraft), 242 hours (Total, this make and model), 314 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 7 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 2 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 1 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	PIPER	Registration:	N8510C
Model/Series:	PA-22 PA-22	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	22-1225
Landing Gear Type:	Tailwheel	Seats:	4
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	September 7, 1993 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	1950 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	2260 Hrs	Engine Manufacturer:	LYCOMING
ELT:		Engine Model/Series:	O-320
Registered Owner:	BARANOSKI, STANLEY	Rated Power:	150 Horsepower
Operator:	BARANOSKI, STANLEY	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	50 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	/	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	0°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:		Temperature/Dew Point:	21°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:		Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:		Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	21:32 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class G

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 Fatal	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Passenger Injuries:	2 Fatal	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	3 Fatal	Latitude, Longitude:	63.699615,-144.88945(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Borson, Timothy
Additional Participating Persons:	CLIFFORD H SMART; FAIRBANKS , AK
Original Publish Date:	January 25, 1995
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=2444

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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](#).