



# Aviation Investigation Final Report

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<b>Location:</b>	RED MOUNTAIN, California	<b>Accident Number:</b>	LAX93LA133
<b>Date &amp; Time:</b>	February 22, 1993, 18:45 Local	<b>Registration:</b>	N5607P
<b>Aircraft:</b>	PIPER PA-24-250	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Substantial
<b>Defining Event:</b>		<b>Injuries:</b>	2 Minor
<b>Flight Conducted Under:</b>	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

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## Analysis

THE PILOT SAID HE DEPARTED NAS CHINA LAKE AT 1520 HOURS AND FLEW TO SAN DIEGO, ARRIVING AT ABOUT 1650 HOURS. THE PILOT REPORTED THAT HE FLEW THE ENTIRE TRIP ON THE LEFT FUEL TANK. THE AIRCRAFT WAS NOT REFUELED DURING THE TIME IT WAS ON THE GROUND IN SAN DIEGO. THE AIRCRAFT DEPARTED AT 1715 HOURS FOR THE RETURN TO NAS CHINA LAKE. AT ABOUT 1835 HOURS THE ENGINE QUIT. THE PILOT SAID HE SWITCHED FUEL TANKS FROM THE RIGHT TO THE LEFT, ENERGIZED THE BOOST PUMP AND WAS ABLE TO GET AN ENGINE RESTART. A FEW MINUTES LATER, THE ENGINE QUIT AGAIN AND THE PILOT SAID HE WAS UNABLE TO GET A RESTART. THE AIRCRAFT DESCENDED INTO A CLOUD DECK AND COLLIDED WITH HILLY TERRAIN DURING THE NIGHT FORCED LANDING ATTEMPT OVER DESERT TERRAIN. AT THE TIME OF THE ENGINE FAILURE, THE PILOT WAS IN CONTACT WITH A TRACON FACILITY RECEIVING RADAR TRAFFIC ADVISORIES. HE REPORTED TO THE CONTROLLER AFTER THE ENGINE FAILURE THAT 'I GUESS I'M OUT OF FUEL.' IN HIS WRITTEN REPORT OF THE ACCIDENT, THE PILOT STATED THAT THERE WAS NO MECHANICAL MALFUNCTION OR FAILURE OF THE AIRCRAFT OR ENGINE.

## Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: FUEL EXHAUSTION DUE TO THE PILOT'S INADEQUATE PREFLIGHT PLANNING AND HIS FAILURE TO REFUEL THE AIRCRAFT. FACTORS IN THE ACCIDENT WERE THE PILOT'S INABILITY TO SEE THE TERRAIN DUE TO THE DARK NIGHT CONDITIONS AND THE FLIGHT'S ENCOUNTER WITH INSTRUMENT METEOROLOGICAL CONDITIONS DURING THE EMERGENCY DESCENT FOLLOWING THE ENGINE FAILURE.

## Findings

Occurrence #1: LOSS OF ENGINE POWER(TOTAL) - NONMECHANICAL

Phase of Operation: CRUISE

### Findings

1. (C) FLUID,FUEL - EXHAUSTION
2. (C) PREFLIGHT PLANNING/PREPARATION - INADEQUATE - PILOT IN COMMAND
3. (C) REFUELING - NOT PERFORMED - PILOT IN COMMAND

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Occurrence #2: FORCED LANDING

Phase of Operation: DESCENT - EMERGENCY

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Occurrence #3: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER

Phase of Operation: DESCENT - EMERGENCY

### Findings

4. (F) TERRAIN CONDITION - MOUNTAINOUS/HILLY
5. (F) LIGHT CONDITION - DARK NIGHT
6. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - OBSCURATION
7. (F) VISUAL/AURAL DETECTION - PILOT IN COMMAND

## Factual Information

### Pilot Information

<b>Certificate:</b>	Private	<b>Age:</b>	29, Male
<b>Airplane Rating(s):</b>	Single-engine land	<b>Seat Occupied:</b>	Left
<b>Other Aircraft Rating(s):</b>	None	<b>Restraint Used:</b>	
<b>Instrument Rating(s):</b>	None	<b>Second Pilot Present:</b>	No
<b>Instructor Rating(s):</b>	None	<b>Toxicology Performed:</b>	No
<b>Medical Certification:</b>	Class 2 Valid Medical--no waivers/lim.	<b>Last FAA Medical Exam:</b>	April 4, 1992
<b>Occupational Pilot:</b>	No	<b>Last Flight Review or Equivalent:</b>	
<b>Flight Time:</b>	203 hours (Total, all aircraft), 6 hours (Total, this make and model), 163 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 6 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 5 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 4 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

### Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

<b>Aircraft Make:</b>	PIPER	<b>Registration:</b>	N5607P
<b>Model/Series:</b>	PA-24-250 PA-24-250	<b>Aircraft Category:</b>	Airplane
<b>Year of Manufacture:</b>		<b>Amateur Built:</b>	
<b>Airworthiness Certificate:</b>	Normal	<b>Serial Number:</b>	24-675
<b>Landing Gear Type:</b>	Retractable - Tricycle	<b>Seats:</b>	4
<b>Date/Type of Last Inspection:</b>	August 22, 1992 100 hour	<b>Certified Max Gross Wt.:</b>	2800 lbs
<b>Time Since Last Inspection:</b>	56 Hrs	<b>Engines:</b>	1 Reciprocating
<b>Airframe Total Time:</b>	4739 Hrs	<b>Engine Manufacturer:</b>	LYCOMING
<b>ELT:</b>	Installed, not activated	<b>Engine Model/Series:</b>	O-540-A1A5
<b>Registered Owner:</b>	LEE PHILLIPS	<b>Rated Power:</b>	250 Horsepower
<b>Operator:</b>	US NAVY CHINA LAKE FLYING CLUB	<b>Operating Certificate(s) Held:</b>	None
<b>Operator Does Business As:</b>		<b>Operator Designator Code:</b>	

## Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

<b>Conditions at Accident Site:</b>	Instrument (IMC)	<b>Condition of Light:</b>	Night/dark
<b>Observation Facility, Elevation:</b>	NID ,2283 ft msl	<b>Distance from Accident Site:</b>	23 Nautical Miles
<b>Observation Time:</b>	18:56 Local	<b>Direction from Accident Site:</b>	326°
<b>Lowest Cloud Condition:</b>	Scattered / 6000 ft AGL	<b>Visibility</b>	25 miles
<b>Lowest Ceiling:</b>	None	<b>Visibility (RVR):</b>	
<b>Wind Speed/Gusts:</b>	10 knots /	<b>Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:</b>	/
<b>Wind Direction:</b>	190°	<b>Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:</b>	/
<b>Altimeter Setting:</b>	29 inches Hg	<b>Temperature/Dew Point:</b>	12°C / 5°C
<b>Precipitation and Obscuration:</b>	N/A - None - Fog		
<b>Departure Point:</b>	SAN DIEGO , CA (MYF )	<b>Type of Flight Plan Filed:</b>	VFR
<b>Destination:</b>	NAS CHINA LAKE , CA (NID )	<b>Type of Clearance:</b>	VFLF
<b>Departure Time:</b>	17:15 Local	<b>Type of Airspace:</b>	Class G

## Airport Information

<b>Airport:</b>		<b>Runway Surface Type:</b>	
<b>Airport Elevation:</b>		<b>Runway Surface Condition:</b>	
<b>Runway Used:</b>	0	<b>IFR Approach:</b>	None
<b>Runway Length/Width:</b>		<b>VFR Approach/Landing:</b>	Forced landing

## Wreckage and Impact Information

<b>Crew Injuries:</b>	1 Minor	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Substantial
<b>Passenger Injuries:</b>	1 Minor	<b>Aircraft Fire:</b>	None
<b>Ground Injuries:</b>	N/A	<b>Aircraft Explosion:</b>	None
<b>Total Injuries:</b>	2 Minor	<b>Latitude, Longitude:</b>	35.349987,-117.619079(est)

## Administrative Information

**Investigator In Charge (IIC):** Rich, Jeff

**Additional Participating Persons:** RON WARREN; VAN NUYS , CA

**Original Publish Date:** November 15, 1993

**Last Revision Date:**

**Investigation Class:** [Class](#)

**Note:**

**Investigation Docket:** <https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=27934>

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