Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	ANNAPOLIS, Maryland	**Accident Number:**	IAD96LA139
Date & Time:	August 23, 1996, 13:30 Local	**Registration:**	N9525L
Aircraft:	American AA-5	**Aircraft Damage:**	Substantial
Defining Event:		**Injuries:**	2 Minor
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The pilot reported that during takeoff climb, he started a left turn at 700 feet, then the engine lost power. He tried unsuccessfully to restart the engine, then he ditched the aircraft in a creek. According to witnesses, the aircraft climbed steeply after takeoff. Witnesses described the angle of climb as '...higher than average...' '...too steep...' and '...at least 45 degrees.' One witness stated, 'I thought he was taking off at too steep an angle of climb when I noticed he appeared to stall out and started to side slip to port and lose altitude rapidly.' Examination of the aircraft did not disclose evidence of a mechanical malfunction.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: failure of the pilot to maintain adequate airspeed after takeoff, which resulted in a stall and subsequent collision with water.

Findings

Occurrence #1: LOSS OF CONTROL - IN FLIGHT
Phase of Operation: TAKEOFF - INITIAL CLIMB

Findings
1. (C) AIRSPEED - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND
2. (C) STALL - INADVERTENT - PILOT IN COMMAND

Occurrence #2: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER
Phase of Operation: DESCENT - UNCONTROLLED

Findings
3. TERRAIN CONDITION - WATER

Factual Information

On August 23, 1996, at about 1330 eastern daylight time, an American AA-5, N9525L, sustained substantial damage when it collided with terrain and a pier shortly after takeoff from Lee Airport in Annapolis, Maryland. The certificated commercial pilot and the one passenger received minor injuries. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed at the time of the accident, no flight plan was filed. The flight was conducted under 14 CFR 91. The pleasure flight originated at Lee Airport, at approximately 1330, with an intended destination of Martin State Airport, in Baltimore, Maryland.

The pilot reported that the " ...Takeoff roll was normal. Aircraft climb-out was normal with no difficulties noted until 700 feet. I started a left hand turn and the engine failed. I continued to execute a left hand turn to return to the airport. All efforts to restart the engine were to no avail. At this time the aircraft was too low to return to the airport." The pilot stated that Warehouse Creek was the only forced landing area available to him. The airplane came to rest in the water, with the tail section supported by the pier.

One witness reported that he saw the airplane "...climbing really steeply off the runway, stopped climbing, stayed at same angle still going forward, then ... plane banked sharply to the left. Plane then seemed to flip, [and] engine sputtered, went straight down." During a telephone interview, the same witness stated that "..the plane was going real steep angle up - at least 45 degrees - looked strange to me ... I thought he was going too slow for the angle he was ... looked like a man running up a mountainside." A second witness reported that he "... observed a Grumman AA5 pass the front of the hanger on takeoff to the east. At that time the engine sounded normal. The only unusual thing I noticed was a longer than normal ground run and a higher than average climb angle." A third witness stated that he "...noticed what appeared to be a Piper Archer taking off. I thought he was taking off at too steep an angle of climb when I noticed he appeared to stall out and started to side slip to port and lose altitude rapidly." The witness stated that when he arrived at the accident scene to render assistance, he "...asked if they were OK and the pilot responded, 'I just [expletive]ed up a little bit, and think [my] leg or foot is broken'."

A post accident inspection of the airframe and powerplant of N9525L with a Federal Aviation Administration Airworthiness Inspector revealed no pre-impact anomalies.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial	**Age:**	50,Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land	**Seat Occupied:**	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	**Restraint Used:**	
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	**Second Pilot Present:**	
Instructor Rating(s):	None	**Toxicology Performed:**	No
Medical Certification:	Class 3 Valid Medical--w/ waivers/lim	**Last FAA Medical Exam:**	May 31, 1995
Occupational Pilot:	UNK	**Last Flight Review or Equivalent:**	
Flight Time:	300 hours (Total, all aircraft), 40 hours (Total, this make and model), 160 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 20 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 10 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 1 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	American	**Registration:**	N9525L
Model/Series:	AA-5 AA-5	**Aircraft Category:**	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		**Amateur Built:**	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	**Serial Number:**	AA5-0525
Landing Gear Type:	Tricycle	**Seats:**	4
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	October 15, 1995 Annual	**Certified Max Gross Wt.:**	2200 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	40 Hrs	**Engines:**	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	2040 Hrs	**Engine Manufacturer:**	Lycoming
ELT:	Installed, not activated	**Engine Model/Series:**	O-320-E2G
Registered Owner:	RAYMOND R. WAGNER	**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:	ADW ,281 ft msl	**Distance from Accident Site:**	20 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	17:55 Local	**Direction from Accident Site:**	251°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Scattered / 4000 ft AGL	**Visibility**	6 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	**Visibility (RVR):**	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	4 knots /	**Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:**	/
Wind Direction:	0°	**Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:**	/
Altimeter Setting:	30 inches Hg	**Temperature/Dew Point:**	31°C / 20°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	N/A - None - Haze		
Departure Point:		**Type of Flight Plan Filed:**	None
Destination:	BALTIMORE , MD (MTN)	**Type of Clearance:**	None
Departure Time:	13:30 Local	**Type of Airspace:**	Class G

Airport Information

Airport:	LEE ANP	**Runway Surface Type:**	Asphalt
Airport Elevation:	30 ft msl	**Runway Surface Condition:**	Dry
Runway Used:	12	**IFR Approach:**	None
Runway Length/Width:	2505 ft / 48 ft	**VFR Approach/Landing:**	None

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Minor	**Aircraft Damage:**	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	1 Minor	**Aircraft Fire:**	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	**Aircraft Explosion:**	None
Total Injuries:	2 Minor	**Latitude, Longitude:**	38.899917,-76.539802(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Rayner, Brian
Additional Participating Persons:	LINDA NEVIN; BALTIMORE , MD
Original Publish Date:	August 29, 1997
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=28102