



Aviation Investigation Final Report

| | | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|
| Location: | SPRINGFIELD, Ohio | Accident Number: | IAD97LA006 |
| Date & Time: | October 13, 1996, 12:20 Local | Registration: | N42719 |
| Aircraft: | Piper J3C-65 | Aircraft Damage: | Substantial |
| Defining Event: | | Injuries: | 1 Fatal, 1 Serious |
| Flight Conducted Under: | Part 91: General aviation - Personal | | |

Analysis

The pilot made a low pass over the airstrip, and while attempting to climb, the airplane clipped a tree at the end of the airstrip. It then entered a right spiral and impacting the ground. One eye witness stated that the purpose of the low pass was to allow the passenger's wife to take pictures from the ground. The left wing was reported to be detached from the airplane before impact with the ground, and the engine was heard running until impact. The pilot had a left quartering tailwind of about 13 knots while conducting this low pass.

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 obstacle clearance, while maneuvering at low altitudes. A related factor was the quartering tail wind.

Findings

Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH OBJECT
Phase of Operation: MANEUVERING

Findings

1. LOW PASS - INITIATED - PILOT IN COMMAND
 2. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - TAILWIND
 3. OBJECT - TREE(S)
 4. (C) ALTITUDE/CLEARANCE - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND
-

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

Factual Information

On October 13, 1996, about 1220 eastern daylight time, a Piper J3C-65, N42719, collided with a tree while maneuvering over a private, unnamed airstrip in Springfield, Ohio. The flight was being conducted under the provisions of Title 14 CFR Part 91, with no flight plan filed. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed. The commercial pilot, occupying the rear seat, sustained serious injuries, the passenger, occupying the front seat, was fatally injured, and the airplane sustained substantial damage. The departure time from the private airstrip is unknown.

An eye witness watched the airplane takeoff to the south and "circle with a plane, flown by the pilot's brother, off the south end of the runway". The witness stated he saw the airplane take a northerly heading, make a low pass over the airstrip, at about 25-30 feet above ground level (AGL), climb to about 45 feet AGL at the midpoint of the airstrip, level off, and then initiate a slow climb. The winds at the time were reported to be from the southwest at about 13 knots. The witness stated that the purpose of the low pass was for the passenger's wife to take pictures. The witness stated he then saw the airplane's tail drop, heard a change in the engine sound, and saw the airplane clip a tree at the end of the runway, falling into the tree. He then saw the airplane bank to the right, about 90 degrees, then lost visual contact with the airplane and started running towards its direction of travel. He stated that when he regained visual contact, the airplane was falling from about 25 feet AGL and the left wing was detached. The witness stated that when he arrived at the impact site, the fuel tank was ruptured and resting on the front seat occupant and that he did not see any fuel in the tanks.

A second eye witness stated he was on the north side of the airstrip when he saw the airplane brush a tree at the end of the airstrip, and its wings begin to wobble. He said he followed the airplane's path and saw the airplane rotate 360 degrees to the right, and impact the ground. He stated that the engine was still running until ground impact.

On site observation, by the FAA, of the wreckage showed the front seat throttle to be 1/2 open and the rear seat throttle to be one 1/4 open. There was continuity in the control cables, as well as in the engine drive train, ignition system, and fuel system . A thumb compression check was done on all cylinders and found to be good.. There were no mechanical problems reported.

Pilot Information

| | | | |
|----------------------------------|--|--|----------------|
| Certificate: | Commercial | Age: | 47, Male |
| Airplane Rating(s): | Single-engine land; Single-engine sea; Multi-engine land | Seat Occupied: | Rear |
| 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 2 Valid Medical-w/ waivers/lim | Last FAA Medical Exam: | August 2, 1996 |
| Occupational Pilot: | UNK | Last Flight Review or Equivalent: | |
| Flight Time: | 13000 hours (Total, all aircraft), 300 hours (Total, this make and model), 12970 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 50 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 15 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 2 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft) | | |

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

| | | | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Aircraft Make: | Piper | Registration: | N42719 |
| Model/Series: | J3C-65 J3C-65 | Aircraft Category: | Airplane |
| Year of Manufacture: | | Amateur Built: | |
| Airworthiness Certificate: | Normal | Serial Number: | 15017 |
| Landing Gear Type: | Tailwheel | Seats: | 2 |
| Date/Type of Last Inspection: | October 2, 1996 Annual | Certified Max Gross Wt.: | 1650 lbs |
| Time Since Last Inspection: | 21 Hrs | Engines: | 1 Reciprocating |
| Airframe Total Time: | 2398 Hrs | Engine Manufacturer: | Continental |
| ELT: | Not installed | Engine Model/Series: | C65 |
| Registered Owner: | DARRELL MONTGOMERY | Rated Power: | 65 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: | FFO ,825 ft msl | Distance from Accident Site: | |
| Observation Time: | 11:55 Local | Direction from Accident Site: | |
| Lowest Cloud Condition: | Scattered / 25000 ft AGL | Visibility | 6 miles |
| Lowest Ceiling: | None | Visibility (RVR): | |
| Wind Speed/Gusts: | 13 knots / | Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual: | / |
| Wind Direction: | 220° | Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual: | / |
| Altimeter Setting: | 30 inches Hg | Temperature/Dew Point: | 18°C / 8°C |
| Precipitation and Obscuration: | No Obscuration; No Precipitation | | |
| Departure Point: | | Type of Flight Plan Filed: | None |
| Destination: | | Type of Clearance: | None |
| Departure Time: | 00:00 Local | Type of Airspace: | Class G |

Airport Information

| | | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------|----------------------------------|------|
| Airport: | PRIVATE STRIP | Runway Surface Type: | |
| Airport Elevation: | | Runway Surface Condition: | |
| Runway Used: | 0 | IFR Approach: | None |
| Runway Length/Width: | | VFR Approach/Landing: | |

Wreckage and Impact Information

| | | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|-------------|
| Crew Injuries: | 1 Serious | Aircraft Damage: | Substantial |
| Passenger Injuries: | 1 Fatal | Aircraft Fire: | None |
| Ground Injuries: | N/A | Aircraft Explosion: | None |
| Total Injuries: | 1 Fatal, 1 Serious | Latitude, Longitude: | |

Administrative Information

| | |
|--|---|
| Investigator In Charge (IIC): | Wilson, Butch |
| Additional Participating Persons: | LES KORODY; CINCINNATI , OH KAREN C WALSH; ATLANTA, GA |
| Original Publish Date: | January 30, 1998 |
| Last Revision Date: | |
| Investigation Class: | Class |
| Note: | |
| Investigation Docket: | https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=28151 |

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](#).