



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	COLOMBIA STATON, Ohio	Accident Number:	IAD97LA040
Date & Time:	December 30, 1996, 19:00 Local	Registration:	N2587G
Aircraft:	Piper PA-38-112	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	2 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Instructional		

Analysis

The airplane was on a dual instructional flight at night, with the student at the controls, when it collided with trees during a landing approach. The flight instructor (CFI) took control of the airplane and flew it to another airport, about 10 miles away, and then landed. Neither the CFI, the registered owner, nor the student reported the accident. During a routine ramp surveillance, an FAA Inspector noticed the airplane was substantially damage. The student pilot, who had about 28 hours of total flight time, said this was her first night dual instruction.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: inadequate supervision by the flight instructor (CFI), and his failure to ensure that sufficient altitude and/or clearance was maintain from obstructions (trees) during the approach. Darkness was a related factor.

Findings

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

Findings

1. (C) SUPERVISION - INADEQUATE - PILOT IN COMMAND(CFI)
2. (F) LIGHT CONDITION - DARK NIGHT

3. OBJECT - TREE(S)

4. (C) ALTITUDE/CLEARANCE - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND(CFI)

Factual Information

On December 30, 1996, at 1900 eastern standard time, a Piper PA-38-112, N2587G, was substantially damaged when it collided with trees during final approach at the Colombia Airport, Colombia Station, Ohio. The certificated flight instructor and student pilot were not injured. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed and a flight plan was not filed. The instructional flight was conducted under 14 CFR Part 91.

The flight instructor reported that he was returning from dinner, and he made a night VFR approach to runway 18. He said, "...In the dark night, I did not see the tree branches struck by the left wing and flap... ."

According to the student, they had flown earlier to Carrollton Airport. She said they departed Carrollton for a flight to Colombia Station. The student said that in the vicinity of Colombia Station,

"...instructor stated that a friend at the airport must have turned the lights on for us...What do you think? (meaning do you see the airport lights?) I said, 'I don't know.' Instructor said, 'Well this is it (the airport). Get lined up and make your approach.' I started to descend and a few seconds later saw tree branches in front of the plane. The instructor took over controls at this time. I heard them hit us twice. We climbed up and out of area. We then headed for Lorain County Airport [10 miles away]. At 1910 [we] landed at Lorain County Airport."

According to a Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Inspector, the student reported that this was her first, night dual instructional flight. Neither the flight instructor nor the student reported the accident. It was an FAA Inspector who during a routine ramp surveillance, found an airplane with substantial damage. The Inspector said there was wood remnants stuck in the left wing tip, and in the left landing gear strut.

Both the student and the flight instructor reported that there was no mechanical malfunction with the airplane. The student had over 28 hours of total flight experience. The instructor had over 17,000 hours of total flight experience. The student stated that the accident could have been prevented if [they] had verified that the [airport] landing lights were on prior to departure, they should have circled area to verify that they were at airport prior to descent for landing, and she should have had more experience as student pilot before attempting night time landings.

According to the Airport/Facility Directory, it states in part:

"...For lights Runway 18R-26L call 216-236-8800, or contact Unicom or FSS."

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial; Flight instructor	Age:	66, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land; Multi-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	Glider	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	Second Pilot Present:	Yes
Instructor Rating(s):	Airplane multi-engine; Airplane single-engine	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 2 Valid Medical-w/ waivers/lim	Last FAA Medical Exam:	September 10, 1996
Occupational Pilot:	UNK	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	17000 hours (Total, all aircraft), 2500 hours (Total, this make and model), 16000 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 30 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 15 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Piper	Registration:	N2587G
Model/Series:	PA-38-112 PA-38-112	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	38-79A0558
Landing Gear Type:	Tricycle	Seats:	2
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	June 24, 1996 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	3600 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	40 Hrs	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	4076 Hrs	Engine Manufacturer:	Lycoming
ELT:	Installed, not activated	Engine Model/Series:	O-235-L2C
Registered Owner:	GEORGE CHOI	Rated Power:	115 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:	Night/dark
Observation Facility, Elevation:	CLE ,792 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	7 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	17:56 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	40°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Unknown	Visibility	7 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	Broken / 1900 ft AGL	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	3 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	160°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	3°C / 1°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	CARROLLTON , OH (TSO)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	(4G8)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	18:20 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Airport Information

Airport:	COLOMBIA 4G8	Runway Surface Type:	Asphalt
Airport Elevation:	813 ft msl	Runway Surface Condition:	Dry
Runway Used:	18	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:	2010 ft / 40 ft	VFR Approach/Landing:	Full stop

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	2 None	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:		Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	2 None	Latitude, Longitude:	41.310993,-81.940277(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC): Drake, Beverley

Additional Participating Persons: BOB TAYLOR; CLEVELAND , OH
ELLEN TOM; CLEVELAND , OH

Original Publish Date: June 26, 1998

Last Revision Date:

Investigation Class: [Class](#)

Note:

Investigation Docket: <https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=28171>

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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](#).