



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	PACIFICA, California	Accident Number:	LAX95LA114
Date & Time:	February 20, 1995, 13:10 Local	Registration:	N28003
Aircraft:	GRUMMAN AA5B	Aircraft Damage:	Minor
Defining Event:		Injuries:	2 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

A GRUMMAN AA5B COLLIDED WITH A CHAMPION 7ECA WHILE IN CRUISE FLIGHT AT 1,300 FEET MSL. NEITHER THE GRUMMAN PILOT NOR THE CHAMPION PILOT HAD PREARRANGED TO FLY IN FORMATION. BOTH AIRPLANES DEPARTED FROM THE SAME AIRPORT AND HAPPENED TO BE FLYING ALONG THE SAME NORTHERLY COASTAL ROUTE. THE PILOT IN THE FASTER FLYING GRUMMAN OBSERVED THE CHAMPION AHEAD, AND INFORMED THE PILOT THAT HE WOULD PASS HIM ON HIS LEFT SIDE. THE CHAMPION PILOT ACKNOWLEDGED THE TRANSMISSION, AND OBSERVED THE GRUMMAN APPROACH FROM HIS 8 O'CLOCK POSITION AND TRAVEL TO HIS 9 O'CLOCK POSITION. THE CHAMPION MAINTAINED A STEADY ALTITUDE AND HEADING. BOTH PILOTS THEN OBSERVED A SOUTHBOUND APPROACHING TWIN-ENGINE AIRPLANE AT ABOUT THEIR ALTITUDE IN THE HAZY SKY. THE GRUMMAN PILOT'S ATTENTION WAS DIVERTED TOWARD THE TWIN, AND HE LOST SIGHT OF THE CHAMPION. SECONDS LATER, THE GRUMMAN'S PROPELLER PARTIALLY SEVERED THE CHAMPION'S LEFT WINGTIP. BOTH AIRPLANES LANDED WITHOUT FURTHER MISHAP.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: FAILURE OF THE GRUMMAN PILOT TO MAINTAIN VISUAL CONTACT AND CLEARANCE FROM THE CITABRIA, WHILE OVERTAKING THAT AIRCRAFT. FACTORS RELATING TO THE ACCIDENT WERE: THE HAZY SKY CONDITION AND THE GRUMMAN PILOT'S DIVERTED ATTENTION TO OTHER TRAFFIC.

Findings

Occurrence #1: MIDAIR COLLISION

Phase of Operation: CRUISE - NORMAL

Findings

1. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - HAZE/SMOKE
2. (C) VISUAL LOOKOUT - INADEQUATE - PILOT IN COMMAND
3. (C) CLEARANCE - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND
4. (F) DIVERTED ATTENTION - PILOT IN COMMAND

Factual Information

On February 20, 1995, at 1310 Pacific standard time, a Grumman AA5B, N28003, and a Citabria 7ECA, N9082L, collided during cruise flight near Pacifica, California. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed. There were no injuries to the private pilot and passenger flying in N28003, or to the private pilot flying in N9082L. Both pilots reported that at the time of the accident they were making personal flights.

In pertinent part, the Grumman pilot reported to the National Transportation Safety Board that he had taken off from the Half Moon Bay Airport at 1255, and he was proceeding in a northward direction toward San Francisco. After climbing to about 1,300 feet mean sea level, he observed the (slower flying) Citabria ahead of him. On the UNICOM frequency, he informed the Citabria pilot that he planned to pass to the Citabria's left side, and he heard the Citabria pilot acknowledge his transmission. As the Grumman pilot was overtaking and nearly abeam the Citabria, the Grumman pilot observed a southerly flying twin-engine airplane approaching nearly head-on. The Grumman pilot indicated to the Safety Board that he watched the approaching traffic and briefly rolled his airplane's wings left and right. He then lost sight of the Citabria, felt a vibration, and realized a collision had occurred.

The Citabria pilot reported to the Safety Board that he had taken off from the Half Moon Bay Airport at 1305, and he was proceeding in a northward direction toward Novato, California. After climbing to about 1,320 feet mean sea level, he heard the pilot flying the Grumman report being at his 8 o'clock position. The Grumman pilot indicated that he planned to overtake and pass the Citabria on the Citabria's left side. The Citabria pilot further reported that he held his altitude and heading steady. He looked out his left window and observed the Grumman in his 8 o'clock position. Seconds later, the Grumman was in his 9 o'clock position.

The Citabria pilot stated that he then observed a twin-engine airplane in his 11 o'clock position flying in a southerly direction. The Citabria pilot further reported that he did not need to make any turns to avoid colliding with the twin-engine airplane which appeared to be slightly above his altitude. Then, according to the Citabria pilot, he "felt a bump" and saw the Grumman above him and to his left. The Citabria pilot also reported that he then observed that his airplane's left wing had ". . . started to come apart from the wing tip to the cabin." Both airplanes returned to the Half Moon Bay Airport and landed without further mishap. The Citabria pilot reported that the Grumman's propeller had evidently sliced through his airplane's left wing thus partially severing its rear spar and aileron (see attached wreckage diagram).

Regarding flight visibility, neither pilot reported experiencing any difficulty in observing each other's airplane. Both pilots reported that their forward flight visibility was restricted by haze.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	49, 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:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 3 Valid Medical-w/ waivers/lim	Last FAA Medical Exam:	April 21, 1994
Occupational Pilot:	UNK	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	768 hours (Total, all aircraft), 57 hours (Total, this make and model), 759 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 7 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 4 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	GRUMMAN	Registration:	N28003
Model/Series:	AA5B AA5B	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	AA5B0935
Landing Gear Type:	Tricycle	Seats:	4
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	January 2, 1995 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	2400 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	18 Hrs	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	1489 Hrs	Engine Manufacturer:	LYCOMING
ELT:	Installed, not activated	Engine Model/Series:	O-360-A4K
Registered Owner:	ALFRED PERREIRA	Rated Power:	180 Horsepower
Operator:	ALFRED PERREIRA	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	4 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	4 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	90°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	23°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	N/A - None - Haze		
Departure Point:	HALF MOON BAY , CA (HAF)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:		Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	12:55 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

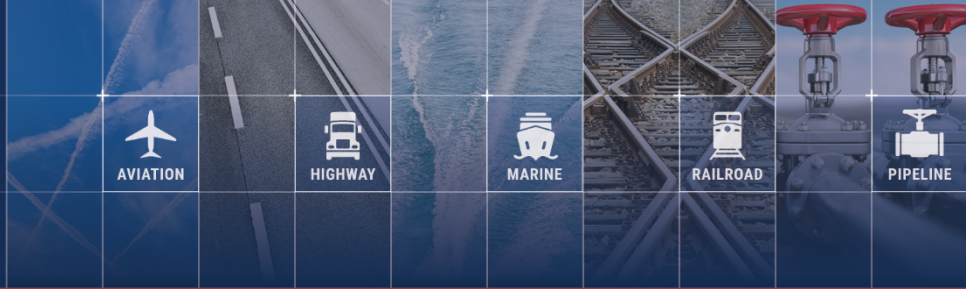
Crew Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Damage:	Minor
Passenger Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	2 None	Latitude, Longitude:	37.60923,-122.479225(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	POLLACK,, WAYNE
Additional Participating Persons:	H. OLIVER; OAKLAND, , CA
Original Publish Date:	January 19, 1996
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=29038

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](#).



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	PACIFICA, California	Accident Number:	LAX95LA114
Date & Time:	February 20, 1995, 13:10 Local	Registration:	N9082L
Aircraft:	CHAMPION 7ECA	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	1 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

A GRUMMAN AA5B COLLIDED WITH A CHAMPION 7ECA WHILE IN CRUISE FLIGHT AT 1,300 FEET MSL. NEITHER THE GRUMMAN PILOT NOR THE CHAMPION PILOT HAD PREARRANGED TO FLY IN FORMATION. BOTH AIRPLANES DEPARTED FROM THE SAME AIRPORT AND HAPPENED TO BE FLYING ALONG THE SAME NORTHERLY COASTAL ROUTE. THE PILOT IN THE FASTER FLYING GRUMMAN OBSERVED THE CHAMPION AHEAD, AND INFORMED THE PILOT THAT HE WOULD PASS HIM ON HIS LEFT SIDE. THE CHAMPION PILOT ACKNOWLEDGED THE TRANSMISSION, AND OBSERVED THE GRUMMAN APPROACH FROM HIS 8 O'CLOCK POSITION AND TRAVEL TO HIS 9 O'CLOCK POSITION. THE CHAMPION MAINTAINED A STEADY ALTITUDE AND HEADING. BOTH PILOTS THEN OBSERVED A SOUTHBOUND APPROACHING TWIN-ENGINE AIRPLANE AT ABOUT THEIR ALTITUDE IN THE HAZY SKY. THE GRUMMAN PILOT'S ATTENTION WAS DIVERTED TOWARD THE TWIN, AND HE LOST SIGHT OF THE CHAMPION. SECONDS LATER, THE GRUMMAN'S PROPELLER PARTIALLY SEVERED THE CHAMPION'S LEFT WINGTIP. BOTH AIRPLANES LANDED WITHOUT FURTHER MISHAP.

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Findings

Occurrence #1: MIDAIR COLLISION

Phase of Operation: CRUISE

Findings

1. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - HAZE/SMOKE
2. (C) VISUAL LOOKOUT - INADEQUATE - PILOT OF OTHER AIRCRAFT
3. (C) CLEARANCE - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT OF OTHER AIRCRAFT
4. (F) DIVERTED ATTENTION - PILOT OF OTHER AIRCRAFT

Factual Information

On February 20, 1995, at 1310 Pacific standard time, a Grumman AA5B, N28003, and a Citabria 7ECA, N9082L, collided during cruise flight near Pacifica, California. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed. There were no injuries to the private pilot and passenger flying in N28003, or to the private pilot flying in N9082L. Both pilots reported that at the time of the accident they were making personal flights.

In pertinent part, the Grumman pilot reported to the National Transportation Safety Board that he had taken off from the Half Moon Bay Airport at 1255, and he was proceeding in a northward direction toward San Francisco. After climbing to about 1,300 feet mean sea level, he observed the (slower flying) Citabria ahead of him. On the UNICOM frequency, he informed the Citabria pilot that he planned to pass to the Citabria's left side, and he heard the Citabria pilot acknowledge his transmission. As the Grumman pilot was overtaking and nearly abeam the Citabria, the Grumman pilot observed a southerly flying twin-engine airplane approaching nearly head-on. The Grumman pilot indicated to the Safety Board that he watched the approaching traffic and briefly rolled his airplane's wings left and right. He then lost sight of the Citabria, felt a vibration, and realized a collision had occurred.

The Citabria pilot reported to the Safety Board that he had taken off from the Half Moon Bay Airport at 1305, and he was proceeding in a northward direction toward Novato, California. After climbing to about 1,320 feet mean sea level, he heard the pilot flying the Grumman report being at his 8 o'clock position. The Grumman pilot indicated that he planned to overtake and pass the Citabria on the Citabria's left side. The Citabria pilot further reported that he held his altitude and heading steady. He looked out his left window and observed the Grumman in his 8 o'clock position. Seconds later, the Grumman was in his 9 o'clock position.

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Regarding flight visibility, neither pilot reported experiencing any difficulty in observing each other's airplane. Both pilots reported that their forward flight visibility was restricted by haze.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	43, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Front
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	None	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 2 Valid Medical--no waivers/lim.	Last FAA Medical Exam:	November 3, 1994
Occupational Pilot:	UNK	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	513 hours (Total, all aircraft), 459 hours (Total, this make and model), 469 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 15 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 5 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 2 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	CHAMPION	Registration:	N9082L
Model/Series:	7ECA 7ECA	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	781-70
Landing Gear Type:	Tailwheel	Seats:	2
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	June 16, 1994 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	1650 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	57 Hrs	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	4078 Hrs	Engine Manufacturer:	LYCOMING
ELT:	Installed, not activated	Engine Model/Series:	O-235-C1
Registered Owner:	JEFFREY C. SMETHURST	Rated Power:	115 Horsepower
Operator:	JEFFREY C. SMETHURST	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	4 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	4 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	90°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	23°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	N/A - None - Haze		
Departure Point:	HALF MOON BAY , CA (HAF)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	NOVATO , CA (O56)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	13:05 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 None	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:		Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 None	Latitude, Longitude:	37.60923,-122.479225(est)

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Original Publish Date:	January 19, 1996
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=29038

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