



# Aviation Investigation Final Report

<b>Location:</b>	LANCASTER, California	<b>Accident Number:</b>	LAX96FA095
<b>Date &amp; Time:</b>	January 12, 1996, 16:45 Local	<b>Registration:</b>	N17261
<b>Aircraft:</b>	Piper J2	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Destroyed
<b>Defining Event:</b>		<b>Injuries:</b>	1 Fatal
<b>Flight Conducted Under:</b>	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

## Analysis

The pilot was performing touch-and-go landings at a private dirt airstrip. A pilot witness observed the airplane turning from crosswind to downwind at what appeared to be a slow airspeed at an estimated altitude of 250 feet agl. The witness said the airplane appeared to stall, roll off on the left wing, and pitch down into the ground. Ground impact signatures indicated that the airplane rotated about 180 degrees after stalling. The weather was VFR with calm winds. No preimpact discrepancies were found during an examination of the aircraft and engine.

## 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, while maneuvering from crosswind to downwind after takeoff, which resulted in an inadvertent stall/spin and collision with terrain.

## Findings

Occurrence #1: LOSS OF CONTROL - IN FLIGHT  
Phase of Operation: MANEUVERING

### Findings

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

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

## Factual Information

### HISTORY OF FLIGHT

On January 12, 1996, about 1645 hours Pacific standard time, a Piper J2 cub, N17261, was destroyed following an in-flight loss of control during traffic pattern operations at a private airstrip in Lancaster, California. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed for the local personal flight and no flight plan was filed. The pilot succumbed to his injuries 2 days after the accident. The flight originated at the airstrip about 1630 with the pilot performing touch-and-go landings.

A pilot witness on the ground observed the airplane about 250 to 300 feet agl turning from crosswind to downwind. The witness said the aircraft appeared to be slower than normal, then it appeared to stall, roll off to the left, pitch down, and impact the ground.

### PERSONNEL INFORMATION

According to the pilot's logbook, he had accumulated about 1,105 total flight hours with the last entry on December 9, 1995. According to the airplane co-owners, they estimated that the pilot had flown the accident airplane a total of about 60 flight hours.

### AIRCRAFT INFORMATION

The airplane was manufactured as a 1936 Taylor Cub, which later became part of Piper Aircraft. According to records, the airplane had accumulated about 1,623 total hours of operation.

### WRECKAGE AND IMPACT INFORMATION

Examination of the wreckage occurred after the airplane had been moved to a storage location. An FAA airworthiness inspector examined and documented the airplane at the accident site prior to removal.

The horizontal stabilizer trim jackscrew was found trimmed to a full nose-up configuration. The trim system was tested during the examination and was found to be functional. The co-owners stated that the stick force to overpower a maximum trim either up or down in this airplane was not excessive due to the low airspeeds that the airplane flew. They stated that they normally kept the trim in the neutral position for all operations.

Control continuity was established to all flight controls. All components of the airplane were accounted for except for one outboard section of a propeller blade and brass tip assembly.

The accident site was revisited in an attempt to locate the blade section without success.

The engine, carburetor, and fuel system were disassembled for examination. After a minor adjustment to the magneto points to correct for impact damage, the magneto was successfully sparked by hand rotation.

#### MEDICAL AND PATHOLOGICAL INFORMATION

The pilot succumbed to his injuries on January 14, 1996. An autopsy was performed by the Los Angeles County Coroner. Toxicological tests were not performed.

#### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The Safety Board did not take possession of the wreckage.

#### Pilot Information

<b>Certificate:</b>	Private	<b>Age:</b>	60, Male
<b>Airplane Rating(s):</b>	Single-engine land	<b>Seat Occupied:</b>	Front
<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 3 Valid Medical--no waivers/lim.	<b>Last FAA Medical Exam:</b>	October 30, 1995
<b>Occupational Pilot:</b>	No	<b>Last Flight Review or Equivalent:</b>	
<b>Flight Time:</b>	1105 hours (Total, all aircraft), 60 hours (Total, this make and model)		

## Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

<b>Aircraft Make:</b>	Piper	<b>Registration:</b>	N17261
<b>Model/Series:</b>	J2 J2	<b>Aircraft Category:</b>	Airplane
<b>Year of Manufacture:</b>		<b>Amateur Built:</b>	
<b>Airworthiness Certificate:</b>	Normal	<b>Serial Number:</b>	927
<b>Landing Gear Type:</b>	Tailwheel	<b>Seats:</b>	2
<b>Date/Type of Last Inspection:</b>	December 3, 1995 Annual	<b>Certified Max Gross Wt.:</b>	1000 lbs
<b>Time Since Last Inspection:</b>	1 Hrs	<b>Engines:</b>	1 Reciprocating
<b>Airframe Total Time:</b>	1623 Hrs	<b>Engine Manufacturer:</b>	Continental
<b>ELT:</b>	Not installed	<b>Engine Model/Series:</b>	A-40-4
<b>Registered Owner:</b>	GRIMES, SWANSON AND ROEHM	<b>Rated Power:</b>	37 Horsepower
<b>Operator:</b>	PALMER J. SWANSON	<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>	Visual (VMC)	<b>Condition of Light:</b>	Day
<b>Observation Facility, Elevation:</b>		<b>Distance from Accident Site:</b>	
<b>Observation Time:</b>		<b>Direction from Accident Site:</b>	
<b>Lowest Cloud Condition:</b>	Clear	<b>Visibility</b>	150 miles
<b>Lowest Ceiling:</b>	None	<b>Visibility (RVR):</b>	
<b>Wind Speed/Gusts:</b>	/	<b>Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:</b>	/
<b>Wind Direction:</b>	0°	<b>Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:</b>	/
<b>Altimeter Setting:</b>		<b>Temperature/Dew Point:</b>	18°C
<b>Precipitation and Obscuration:</b>	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
<b>Departure Point:</b>	(NONE)	<b>Type of Flight Plan Filed:</b>	None
<b>Destination:</b>		<b>Type of Clearance:</b>	None
<b>Departure Time:</b>	16:30 Local	<b>Type of Airspace:</b>	Class G

## Airport Information

<b>Airport:</b>	PRIVATE AIRSTRIP	<b>Runway Surface Type:</b>	Dirt
<b>Airport Elevation:</b>	2340 ft msl	<b>Runway Surface Condition:</b>	Dry
<b>Runway Used:</b>	6	<b>IFR Approach:</b>	None
<b>Runway Length/Width:</b>	1800 ft / 40 ft	<b>VFR Approach/Landing:</b>	Touch and go;Traffic pattern

## Wreckage and Impact Information

<b>Crew Injuries:</b>	1 Fatal	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Destroyed
<b>Passenger Injuries:</b>		<b>Aircraft Fire:</b>	None
<b>Ground Injuries:</b>	N/A	<b>Aircraft Explosion:</b>	None
<b>Total Injuries:</b>	1 Fatal	<b>Latitude, Longitude:</b>	34.72039,-118.479911(est)

## Administrative Information

<b>Investigator In Charge (IIC):</b>	Petterson, George
<b>Additional Participating Persons:</b>	NORM SHUE; VAN NUYS , CA CHARLES R LITTLE; VERO BEACH , FL MICHAEL J GRIMES; LANCASTER , CA ROBERT W ROEHM; VAN NUYS , CA
<b>Original Publish Date:</b>	July 3, 1996
<b>Last Revision Date:</b>	
<b>Investigation Class:</b>	<a href="#">Class</a>
<b>Note:</b>	
<b>Investigation Docket:</b>	<a href="https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=29251">https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=29251</a>

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