Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	AUBURN, California	**Accident Number:**	LAX96LA324
Date & Time:	August 29, 1996, 16:30 Local	**Registration:**	N9315E
Aircraft:	Cessna 172N	**Aircraft Damage:**	Substantial
Defining Event:		**Injuries:**	2 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

According to the pilot, at the conclusion of his 2.5-hour-long flight he entered the traffic pattern and observed that the airplane was slightly high. On final approach, he believed that the airplane was slightly low, so he reduced the landing flaps to the 10-degree setting. He then realized that he had misjudged his altitude and was, in fact, high. The pilot further reported that he misjudged the airplane's rate of descent, which he characterized as excessive, and the airplane touched down hard on the runway. Thereafter, the airplane bounced, recontacted the runway, bounced again, and came to rest with a collapsed nose gear strut and bent firewall. The pilot had received a biennial flight review the morning of the accident flight. Prior to the BFR, he had not flown an airplane in 2 years.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: the pilot's misjudged landing flare and improper bounced landing recovery. A contributing factor was his lack of recent flying experience.

Findings

Occurrence #1: HARD LANDING
Phase of Operation: LANDING - FLARE/TOUCHDOWN

Findings
1. PROPER DESCENT RATE - NOT ATTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND

2. (F) LACK OF RECENT EXPERIENCE - PILOT IN COMMAND
3. (C) FLARE - MISJUDGED - PILOT IN COMMAND

Occurrence #2: NOSE GEAR COLLAPSED
Phase of Operation: LANDING - FLARE/TOUCHDOWN

Findings
4. LANDING GEAR,NOSE GEAR - OVERLOAD

Factual Information

On August 29, 1996, at 1630 hours Pacific daylight time, a Cessna 172N, N9315E, experienced a hard landing at the Auburn Municipal Airport, Auburn, California. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed at the time, and a visual flight rules flight plan was filed. The airplane was substantially damaged, and neither the private pilot nor the passenger was injured. The flight originated from Lompoc, California, at 1400.

According to the pilot, he made a traffic pattern approach to the airport and was slightly high on the downwind leg. On final approach, he believed that the airplane was slightly low, so he reduced the landing flaps to the 10-degree setting. He then realized that he had misjudged his altitude and was, in fact, high.

The pilot further reported that he misjudged the airplane's rate of descent and attempted a short field landing. He attempted to flare, but the airplane continued its "excessive rate of descent" and it contacted the runway, bounced, recontacted the runway, bounced, and came to rest with a collapsed nose gear strut and bent firewall.

Regarding the pilot's currency, he received a biennial flight review the morning of the accident flight. Prior to the BFR, he had not flown an airplane in 2 years.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	**Age:**	65,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:**	August 28, 1996
Occupational Pilot:	UNK	**Last Flight Review or Equivalent:**	
Flight Time:	160 hours (Total, all aircraft), 100 hours (Total, this make and model), 100 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 4 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 4 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 4 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Cessna	**Registration:**	N9315E
Model/Series:	172N 172N	**Aircraft Category:**	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		**Amateur Built:**	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	**Serial Number:**	17272221
Landing Gear Type:	Tricycle	**Seats:**	4
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	July 11, 1996 Annual	**Certified Max Gross Wt.:**	2300 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		**Engines:**	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	6056 Hrs	**Engine Manufacturer:**	Lycoming
ELT:	Installed, not activated	**Engine Model/Series:**	O-320-H2AD
Registered Owner:	WILLIAM D. TRESKY	**Rated Power:**	160 Horsepower
Operator:	GENE E. SCHLIMMER	**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**	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	**Visibility (RVR):**	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	/ None	**Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:**	/
Wind Direction:	0°	**Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:**	/
Altimeter Setting:		**Temperature/Dew Point:**	39°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	LOMPOC (LPC)	**Type of Flight Plan Filed:**	None
Destination:	(AUN)	**Type of Clearance:**	None
Departure Time:	14:00 Local	**Type of Airspace:**	Class E

Airport Information

Airport:	AUBURN MUNICIPAL AUN	**Runway Surface Type:**	Asphalt
Airport Elevation:	1531 ft msl	**Runway Surface Condition:**	Dry
Runway Used:	25	**IFR Approach:**	None
Runway Length/Width:	3100 ft / 60 ft	**VFR Approach/Landing:**	Full stop;Traffic pattern

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 None	**Aircraft Damage:**	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	1 None	**Aircraft Fire:**	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	**Aircraft Explosion:**	None
Total Injuries:	2 None	**Latitude, Longitude:**	38.920055,-121.069808(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Pollack, Wayne
Additional Participating Persons:	EARL R BENEDICT; SACRAMENTO , CA
Original Publish Date:	September 5, 1997
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=29551