



# Aviation Investigation Final Report

<b>Location:</b>	BANNING, California	<b>Accident Number:</b>	LAX97LA079
<b>Date &amp; Time:</b>	December 29, 1996, 11:15 Local	<b>Registration:</b>	N9944U
<b>Aircraft:</b>	Grumman American AA-5A	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Substantial
<b>Defining Event:</b>		<b>Injuries:</b>	1 Minor
<b>Flight Conducted Under:</b>	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

## Analysis

The pilot told responding police officers that he was flying to the Banning airport to refuel when the engine began to sputter. He further stated that he was in the process of changing fuel tanks and did not see the high tension power lines. The officers reported that the accident site was in a canyon in the foothills north of the city. The power lines struck by the aircraft hang below the elevation of the canyon ridges where the towers are located. The lines are not marked. Several ground witnesses, including an off-duty Banning police sergeant, reported that they observed the aircraft flying low in the canyons near the accident site for at least a 15-minute period before the aircraft collided with power lines. Police officers at the accident site reported that they were concerned because fuel was leaking from both fuel tanks and posed a threat to a nearby stream.

## Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The pilot's intentional low flight in an area of foothills and canyons at an altitude insufficient to maintain clearance from obstacles.

## Findings

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

Findings

1. OBJECT - WIRE, TRANSMISSION
2. (C) LOW ALTITUDE FLIGHT/MANEUVER - INTENTIONAL - PILOT IN COMMAND
3. (C) ALTITUDE/CLEARANCE - INADEQUATE - PILOT IN COMMAND
4. (C) VISUAL LOOKOUT - INADEQUATE - PILOT IN COMMAND

## Factual Information

On December 29, 1996, at 1115 hours Pacific standard time, a Grumman American AA-5A, N9944U, collided with high tension power lines in a canyon area near Banning, California. The aircraft was owned and operated by the pilot and was on a personal flight. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed at the time and no flight plan was filed. The aircraft sustained substantial damaged. The certificated private pilot, the sole occupant sustained minor injuries. The flight originated from Redlands, California, on the day of the accident at 1030.

The pilot told responding Banning city police officers that he was flying to the Banning airport to refuel when the engine began to sputter. He further stated that he was in the process of changing fuel tanks and did not see the high tension power lines.

The police officers reported that the accident site was in a canyon in the foothills north of the city. The power lines struck by the aircraft hang below the elevation of the canyon ridges where the towers are located. The lines are not marked. Several ground witnesses, including an off-duty Banning police sergeant, reported that they observed the aircraft flying low in the canyons near the accident site for at least a 15-minute period before the aircraft collided with power lines. The police officers at the accident site reported that they were concerned because fuel was leaking from both fuel tanks and posed a threat to a nearby stream.

### Pilot Information

<b>Certificate:</b>	Private	<b>Age:</b>	43, Male
<b>Airplane Rating(s):</b>	Single-engine land; Multi-engine land	<b>Seat Occupied:</b>	Left
<b>Other Aircraft Rating(s):</b>	None	<b>Restraint Used:</b>	
<b>Instrument Rating(s):</b>	Airplane	<b>Second Pilot Present:</b>	No
<b>Instructor Rating(s):</b>	None	<b>Toxicology Performed:</b>	No
<b>Medical Certification:</b>	Class 2 Valid Medical--no waivers/lim.	<b>Last FAA Medical Exam:</b>	January 8, 1996
<b>Occupational Pilot:</b>	UNK	<b>Last Flight Review or Equivalent:</b>	
<b>Flight Time:</b>	860 hours (Total, all aircraft), 820 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 49 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft)		

## Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

<b>Aircraft Make:</b>	Grumman American	<b>Registration:</b>	N9944U
<b>Model/Series:</b>	AA-5A AA-5A	<b>Aircraft Category:</b>	Airplane
<b>Year of Manufacture:</b>		<b>Amateur Built:</b>	
<b>Airworthiness Certificate:</b>	Normal	<b>Serial Number:</b>	AA5A-0344
<b>Landing Gear Type:</b>	Tricycle	<b>Seats:</b>	4
<b>Date/Type of Last Inspection:</b>	November 1, 1996 Annual	<b>Certified Max Gross Wt.:</b>	2200 lbs
<b>Time Since Last Inspection:</b>	11 Hrs	<b>Engines:</b>	1 Reciprocating
<b>Airframe Total Time:</b>	2284 Hrs	<b>Engine Manufacturer:</b>	Lycoming
<b>ELT:</b>	Installed, activated, did not aid in locating accident	<b>Engine Model/Series:</b>	O-320-E2G
<b>Registered Owner:</b>	JONATHAN K. ROBERTS	<b>Rated Power:</b>	150 Horsepower
<b>Operator:</b>		<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>	BNG ,2219 ft msl	<b>Distance from Accident Site:</b>	5 Nautical Miles
<b>Observation Time:</b>	11:47 Local	<b>Direction from Accident Site:</b>	180°
<b>Lowest Cloud Condition:</b>	Clear	<b>Visibility</b>	25 miles
<b>Lowest Ceiling:</b>	Broken / 18000 ft AGL	<b>Visibility (RVR):</b>	
<b>Wind Speed/Gusts:</b>	8 knots /	<b>Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:</b>	/
<b>Wind Direction:</b>	90°	<b>Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:</b>	/
<b>Altimeter Setting:</b>	30 inches Hg	<b>Temperature/Dew Point:</b>	18°C / 8°C
<b>Precipitation and Obscuration:</b>	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
<b>Departure Point:</b>	REDLANDS , CA (L12 )	<b>Type of Flight Plan Filed:</b>	None
<b>Destination:</b>	BANNING , CA (BNG )	<b>Type of Clearance:</b>	None
<b>Departure Time:</b>	10:50 Local	<b>Type of Airspace:</b>	Class E

## Airport Information

<b>Airport:</b>		<b>Runway Surface Type:</b>	
<b>Airport Elevation:</b>		<b>Runway Surface Condition:</b>	
<b>Runway Used:</b>	0	<b>IFR Approach:</b>	None
<b>Runway Length/Width:</b>		<b>VFR Approach/Landing:</b>	None

## Wreckage and Impact Information

<b>Crew Injuries:</b>	1 Minor	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Substantial
<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 Minor	<b>Latitude, Longitude:</b>	33.950832,-116.830711(est)

## Administrative Information

<b>Investigator In Charge (IIC):</b>	Rich, Jeff
<b>Additional Participating Persons:</b>	ROGER BROWNLOW; RIVERSIDE , CA
<b>Original Publish Date:</b>	August 25, 1997
<b>Last Revision Date:</b>	
<b>Investigation Class:</b>	<a href="#">Class</a>
<b>Note:</b>	
<b>Investigation Docket:</b>	<a href="https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=29709">https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=29709</a>

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