



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	GILROY, California	Accident Number:	LAX97LA127
Date & Time:	March 19, 1997, 15:30 Local	Registration:	N16KB
Aircraft:	Passadori Norman BREEZY	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Defining Event:		Injuries:	1 Fatal, 1 Serious
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The passenger, also an airline transport pilot, reported that the pilot had fueled the aircraft to capacity before takeoff. The passenger was in the rear seat of the 125-horsepower aircraft as they climbed from takeoff toward a ridge line separating them from their sightseeing destination. They were climbing slowly up a canyon at low altitude when the pilot acknowledged that the aircraft was not climbing fast enough to clear the ridge. The pilot attempted to reverse course, but during the turn the aircraft mushed and the right wing struck a tree. The aircraft then cartwheeled onto the ground. The passenger stated that there were no mechanical problems with the aircraft.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The pilot's delayed decision to reverse course while climbing into rising terrain, and his failure to maintain an adequate airspeed margin which resulted in a stall/mush into trees and terrain.

Findings

Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH OBJECT
Phase of Operation: MANEUVERING - TURN TO REVERSE DIRECTION

- Findings
1. TERRAIN CONDITION - BLIND/BOX CANYON
 2. OBJECT - TREE(S)

3. (C) MANEUVER TO AVOID OBSTRUCTIONS - DELAYED - PILOT IN COMMAND
4. (C) AIRSPEED(VS) - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND
5. (C) STALL/MUSH - ENCOUNTERED - PILOT IN COMMAND

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

Factual Information

On March 19, 1997, at 1530 hours Pacific standard time, an experimental Passadori Norman Breezy, N16KB, collided with trees while maneuvering at a low altitude near Gilroy, California. The airline transport pilot was fatally injured, one passenger was seriously injured, and the aircraft was destroyed. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed for the personal flight which departed about 1510 from the Hollister, California, municipal airport.

In an interview with inspectors from the FAA San Jose Flight Standards District Office (FSDO) on March 26, 1997, the passenger, also an airline transport pilot, reported that the pilot had fueled the aircraft to capacity before takeoff from Hollister. The passenger was in the rear seat of the 125-horsepower aircraft as they climbed from takeoff toward a ridge line separating them from their sightseeing destination, Coyote Reservoir. They were climbing slowly up a canyon at low altitude when the pilot acknowledged that the aircraft was not climbing fast enough to clear the ridge. The pilot attempted to reverse course to the right, but during the turn the aircraft mushed and the right wing struck a tree. The aircraft then cartwheeled onto the ground. The passenger stated that there were no mechanical problems with the aircraft.

The pilot's son told the same FSDO inspectors that this was the third aircraft of this type that his father had owned. His father had commented that this airplane was under-powered and that he was considering installing a 150-horsepower engine.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Airline transport; Commercial	Age:	73, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land; Multi-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Front
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	Second Pilot Present:	Yes
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	Yes
Medical Certification:	Class 2 Valid Medical-w/ waivers/lim	Last FAA Medical Exam:	October 2, 1996
Occupational Pilot:	No	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	10000 hours (Total, all aircraft), 400 hours (Total, this make and model), 15 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 10 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 5 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Passadori Norman	Registration:	N16KB
Model/Series:	BREEZY BREEZY	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	Yes
Airworthiness Certificate:	Experimental (Special)	Serial Number:	953-24
Landing Gear Type:	Tricycle	Seats:	
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	April 16, 1996 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	402 Hrs	Engine Manufacturer:	Lycoming
ELT:	Installed, activated, did not aid in locating accident	Engine Model/Series:	O-290-G
Registered Owner:	KENNETH J. BUNKER	Rated Power:	125 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:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	SJC ,58 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	26 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	15:47 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	118°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Unknown	Visibility	16 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	Overcast / 20000 ft AGL	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	6 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	310°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	27°C / 11°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	HOLLISTER , CA (307)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	SAN JOSE , CA (RHV)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	15:10 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Airport Information

Airport:		Runway Surface Type:	
Airport Elevation:		Runway Surface Condition:	
Runway Used:	0	IFR Approach:	
Runway Length/Width:		VFR Approach/Landing:	

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Fatal, 1 Serious	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Passenger Injuries:		Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 Fatal, 1 Serious	Latitude, Longitude:	37.060333,-121.550003(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Parker, Richard
Additional Participating Persons:	JOSEPH ABRAMSKI; SAN JOSE , CA
Original Publish Date:	October 14, 1997
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=29745

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