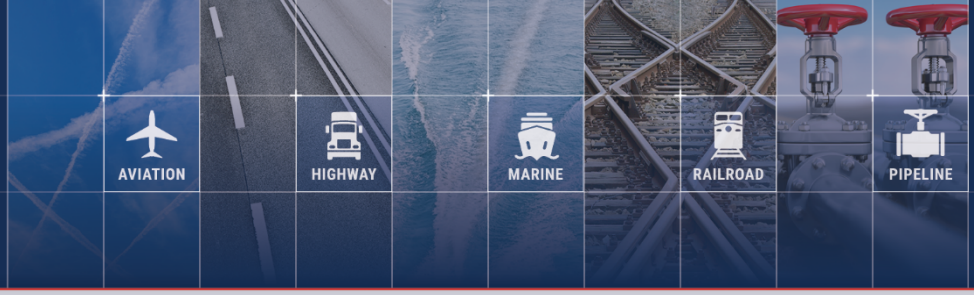


# Aviation Investigation Final Report

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Location:** | SUSANVILLE, California | **Accident Number:** | LAX97LA236 |
| **Date & Time:** | July 9, 1997, 12:40 Local | **Registration:** | N28299 |
| **Aircraft:** | Grumman American AA-5B | **Aircraft Damage:** | Substantial |
| **Defining Event:** | | **Injuries:** | 1 None |
| **Flight Conducted Under:** | Part 91: General aviation - Personal | | |

## Analysis

The pilot flew over the airport to checked the wind, which he said favored Runway 16. He noted there was a little ripple on a lake adjacent to the runway, but no waves or white caps. He determined that the wind was probably 170 to 180 degrees at 6 to 7 knots, with the windsock about 1/2 way out. The landing approach was normal. During the landing flare, a gust of wind caused the right wing to rise unexpectedly to approximately a 45-degree angle, almost forcing the left wing on to the runway surface. The pilot reported that he attempted to go around; however, the wind was blowing the aircraft to the left, and the aircraft was 'behind the power curve.' The pilot also stated that 'I think I touched [down] but am not sure.' The aircraft ultimately crashed through a barbed wire perimeter fence before coming to rest in a lake. Rescue personnel reported that near the time the accident, the winds were 'kicking from the west' with short gusts of approximately 20 to 30 mph. Also, they noted that in the general area of the accident, 'gusts come out of nowhere on a moments notice.' Density altitude was computed to be 8,000 feet msl.

## Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: the pilot's inadvertent encounter with unfavorable weather conditions during the landing, and his failure to maintain runway alignment. The sudden onset of crosswind gusts beyond the capability of the aircraft was a related factor.

## Findings

Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT ENCOUNTER WITH WEATHER
Phase of Operation: LANDING - FLARE/TOUCHDOWN

Findings
1. (C) WEATHER CONDITION - UNFAVORABLE WIND
2. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - CROSSWIND
3. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - GUSTS
4. (C) FLIGHT INTO ADVERSE WEATHER - INADVERTENT - PILOT IN COMMAND
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Occurrence #2: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH OBJECT
Phase of Operation: LANDING - ABORTED

Findings
5. (C) PROPER ALIGNMENT - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND
6. OBJECT - FENCE
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Occurrence #3: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER
Phase of Operation: LANDING - ABORTED

Findings
7. TERRAIN CONDITION - WATER

## Factual Information

On July 9, 1997, at 1240 hours Pacific daylight time, a Grumman American AA-5B, N28299, veered off the runway, collided with an airport perimeter fence, and came to rest in a lake during an aborted landing attempt at Spaulding Airport, Susanville, California. The aircraft was operated by the pilot for the personal cross-country flight. The aircraft was substantially damaged, and the certificated private pilot, the sole occupant, was not injured. The flight originated from the Nervino airport, Beckwourth, California, earlier that same day, and visual meteorological conditions prevailed at the time.

According to the pilot's written statement he flew over the airport at 7,000 feet msl and "checked [the] wind, which favored Rwy 16 . . . there was a little ripple on the water but no waves or white caps." He further noted that the wind was "probably 170-180 degrees at 6-7" knots and the "wind sock [was] about 1/2 way out." The landing approach was normal. During the landing flare, a gust of wind caused the right wing to rise unexpectedly to approximately a 45-degree angle, almost forcing the left wing on to the runway surface. The pilot reported that he attempted to go-around, however, the wind was blowing the aircraft to the left and the aircraft was "behind the power curve." The pilot also stated that "I think I touched [down] but am not sure." The aircraft ultimately crashed through a barbed wire fence before coming to rest in Eagle Lake.

Rescue personnel reported that near the time the accident occurred, the winds were "kicking from the west" with short gusts of approximately 20 to 30 mph. Additionally, they noted that in the general area of the accident, "gusts come out of nowhere on a moments notice."

The rescue personnel reported that the temperature was between 85 to 90 degrees Fahrenheit at the time the accident occurred. Based on that temperature and the airport elevation, the density altitude was computed to be 8,000 feet msl.

## Pilot Information

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|---|---|---|---|
| **Certificate:** | Private | **Age:** | 51,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:** | June 10, 1996 |
| **Occupational Pilot:** | UNK | **Last Flight Review or Equivalent:** | |
| **Flight Time:** | 305 hours (Total, all aircraft), 41 hours (Total, this make and model), 246 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 10 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 7 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 3 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft) | | |

## Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Aircraft Make:** | Grumman American | **Registration:** | N28299 |
| **Model/Series:** | AA-5B AA-5B | **Aircraft Category:** | Airplane |
| **Year of Manufacture:** | | **Amateur Built:** | |
| **Airworthiness Certificate:** | Normal; Utility | **Serial Number:** | AA5B0537 |
| **Landing Gear Type:** | Tricycle | **Seats:** | 4 |
| **Date/Type of Last Inspection:** | Unknown | **Certified Max Gross Wt.:** | 2400 lbs |
| **Time Since Last Inspection:** | | **Engines:** | 1 Reciprocating |
| **Airframe Total Time:** | | **Engine Manufacturer:** | Lycoming |
| **ELT:** | | **Engine Model/Series:** | O-360-A4K |
| **Registered Owner:** | CATHERINE S. HAAS | **Rated Power:** | 180 Horsepower |
| **Operator:** | JERRY R. ATTAWAY | **Operating Certificate(s) Held:** | None |
| **Operator Does Business As:** | | **Operator Designator Code:** | |

## Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

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|---|---|---|---|
| **Conditions at Accident Site:** | Visual (VMC) | **Condition of Light:** | Day |
| **Observation Facility, Elevation:** | GRS ,6050 ft msl | **Distance from Accident Site:** | 8 Nautical Miles |
| **Observation Time:** | 12:47 Local | **Direction from Accident Site:** | 360° |
| **Lowest Cloud Condition:** | Clear | **Visibility** | 10 miles |
| **Lowest Ceiling:** | None | **Visibility (RVR):** | |
| **Wind Speed/Gusts:** | 6 knots / 13 knots | **Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:** | / |
| **Wind Direction:** | 213° | **Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:** | / |
| **Altimeter Setting:** | | **Temperature/Dew Point:** | 25°C / -4°C |
| **Precipitation and Obscuration:** | No Obscuration; No Precipitation | | |
| **Departure Point:** | BECKWOURTH , CA (O02 ) | **Type of Flight Plan Filed:** | None |
| **Destination:** | (1Q2 ) | **Type of Clearance:** | None |
| **Departure Time:** | 12:00 Local | **Type of Airspace:** | Class E |

## Airport Information

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Airport:** | SPAULDING 1Q2 | **Runway Surface Type:** | Asphalt |
| **Airport Elevation:** | 5116 ft msl | **Runway Surface Condition:** | Dry |
| **Runway Used:** | 16 | **IFR Approach:** | None |
| **Runway Length/Width:** | 4600 ft / 50 ft | **VFR Approach/Landing:** | Full stop;Traffic pattern |

## 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:** | 40.570713,-120.610961(est) |

## Administrative Information

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|---|---|
| **Investigator In Charge (IIC):** | Rich, Jeff |
| **Additional Participating Persons:** | JERRY ROBERTS; RENO , NV |
| **Original Publish Date:** | December 15, 1997 |
| **Last Revision Date:** | |
| **Investigation Class:** | Class |
| **Note:** | |
| **Investigation Docket:** | https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=29831 |