



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	ANCHORAGE, Alaska	Accident Number:	ANC97LA147
Date & Time:	September 12, 1997, 15:45 Local	Registration:	N2389M
Aircraft:	Piper PA-12	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	2 Minor
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The pilot was on final approach to an off-airport landing area with a light, right 30 degree crosswind. The pilot said the airplane was configured with full flaps, and the indicated airspeed was between 30 and 35 miles per hour. A stand of trees was directly upwind, and next to, the runway threshold. On short final to land, the airplane settled, the wheels struck the river bank short of the runway, and the airplane nosed over.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The pilot's misjudgment of the touchdown point, which led to undershoot and the airplane nosing over.

Findings

Occurrence #1: UNDERSHOOT
Phase of Operation: LANDING

Findings

1. (C) PROPER TOUCHDOWN POINT - MISJUDGED - PILOT IN COMMAND

Occurrence #2: NOSE OVER
Phase of Operation: LANDING - ROLL



Factual Information

On September 12, 1997, at 1545 Alaska daylight time, a Piper PA-12 airplane, N2389M, sustained substantial damage when it nosed over during landing at a gravel bar on the Theodore River, about 25 miles west of Anchorage, Alaska. The private certificated pilot and one passenger sustained minor injuries. The flight was conducted under 14 CFR Part 91, as a personal flight from Merrill Field in Anchorage, to the Theodore River, and returning. The flight departed Merrill Field at 1335. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed at the time of the accident, and no flight plan was filed.

The pilot reported he was landing to the west with an approximate 30 degree right crosswind of four knots. The airplane was just above touchdown, at an indicated airspeed of 30 to 35 miles per hour, with full flaps extended, when the airplane settled. He stated the airplane landed hard, the tail came up, and the prop struck the ground. The airplane nosed over onto its back.

Photographs of the landing site reveal a stand of trees just to the right of the approach end of the landing area. The airplane was configured with 8.50 x 6 inch tires. Photographs of the gravel bar reveal two 6 inch wide gouges in the sand beginning below the lip of the river bank, and continuing onto the landing area. Between these gouges are four slash marks oriented approximately 45 degrees to the gouges, spaced about equally in the line of airplane travel.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	48, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land; Single-engine sea	Seat Occupied:	Front
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 2 Valid Medical--no waivers/lim.	Last FAA Medical Exam:	June 2, 1997
Occupational Pilot:	No	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	934 hours (Total, all aircraft), 89 hours (Total, this make and model), 896 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 61 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 19 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 2 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Piper	Registration:	N2389M
Model/Series:	PA-12 PA-12	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	12-1511
Landing Gear Type:	Tailwheel	Seats:	3
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	August 9, 1997 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	1935 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	14 Hrs	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	4182 Hrs	Engine Manufacturer:	Lycoming
ELT:	Installed, activated, did not aid in locating accident	Engine Model/Series:	O-360-A2A
Registered Owner:	JAY ALLEN ROSENBAACH	Rated Power:	180 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:		Distance from Accident Site:	
Observation Time:		Direction from Accident Site:	
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Visibility	35 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	4 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	270°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	16°C / 9°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	, AK (MRI)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	THEODORE RIVER, AK	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	13:35 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Airport Information

Airport:		Runway Surface Type:	
Airport Elevation:		Runway Surface Condition:	
Runway Used:	0	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:		VFR Approach/Landing:	Full stop;Valley/terrain following

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Minor	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	1 Minor	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	2 Minor	Latitude, Longitude:	

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Thomas, Matthew
Additional Participating Persons:	ROBERT S COUBAN; ANCHORAGE , AK
Original Publish Date:	November 10, 1998
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=3067

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