



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	CENTREVILLE, Alabama	Accident Number:	ATL94FA046
Date & Time:	January 28, 1994, 14:30 Local	Registration:	N6085P
Aircraft:	PIPER PA-24-250	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	2 Fatal
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

THE PILOT HAD PURCHASED THE AIRPLANE 11 DAYS PRIOR TO THE ACCIDENT, AND HAD 9 HOURS OF FLIGHT EXPERIENCE IN THE AIRPLANE. AFTER DEPARTING RUNWAY 27, WITNESSES HEARD THE PILOT REPORT ON UNICOM THAT HE WAS RETURNING TO THE AIRPORT WITH AN UNSPECIFIED EMERGENCY. THE AIRPLANE WAS OBSERVED IN A STEEP LEFT BANK AND NOSE DOWN ATTITUDE JUST PRIOR TO IMPACT WITH THE TERRAIN WEST OF THE DEPARTURE END OF RUNWAY 27. THE AIRPLANE FUEL SELECTORS WERE FOUND IN THE TIP TANK SELECTED POSITION. THE FAA-APPROVED AIRPLANE FLIGHT MANUAL SUPPLEMENT FOR INSTALLATION OF BRITAIN INDUSTRIES WING TIP FUEL TANKS ON PIPER PA-24-250 AIRCRAFT STATES THAT WING TIP TANK FUEL IS TO BE USED IN LEVEL FLIGHT ONLY.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: THE PILOT'S FAILURE TO ASSURE THAT THE FUEL SELECTOR WAS IN THE PROPER POSITION FOR TAKEOFF.

Findings

Occurrence #1: LOSS OF ENGINE POWER(TOTAL) - NONMECHANICAL
Phase of Operation: TAKEOFF - INITIAL CLIMB

Findings

1. (C) FLUID,FUEL - STARVATION
2. (C) FUEL TANK SELECTOR POSITION - IMPROPER - PILOT IN COMMAND
3. (F) LACK OF FAMILIARITY WITH AIRCRAFT - PILOT IN COMMAND

Occurrence #2: FORCED LANDING

Phase of Operation: EMERGENCY LANDING AFTER TAKEOFF

Occurrence #3: LOSS OF CONTROL - IN FLIGHT

Phase of Operation: EMERGENCY LANDING AFTER TAKEOFF

Occurrence #4: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER

Phase of Operation: EMERGENCY LANDING AFTER TAKEOFF

Factual Information

HISTORY OF FLIGHT

On January 28, 1994, about 1430 central standard time, a Piper PA-24-250, N6085P, was substantially damaged following a collision with terrain during a forced landing near Centreville, Alabama. The private pilot and his passenger were fatally injured. The aircraft was being operated under 14 CFR Part 91 by the pilot. Visual meteorological conditions existed at the time, and no flight plan had been filed for the personal flight. The flight departed Centreville at 1429, and was destined for Alabaster, Alabama.

Witnesses reported that the pilot called on the unicom frequency immediately after take-off, and reported he was attempting to return to the airport with an unspecified emergency. The witnesses stated that they then observed the aircraft enter a steep left bank, and collide with the terrain in a nose down attitude just west of the departure end of runway 27.

PERSONNEL INFORMATION

The pilot held a private pilot certificate with airplane single and multiengine land ratings. He held a third class medical certificate.

The pilot's flight log showed he had obtained a total of 9 hours of flight time in the PA-24-250 aircraft.

Additional personnel information may be obtained on page 3 of this report under the section titled First Pilot Information.

AIRCRAFT INFORMATION

The Piper PA-24-250 "Comanche" is a four place, single engine aircraft. It is powered by a Lycoming O-540 250 horse power engine.

The aircraft had been modified with the installation of Brittain Industries 15 gallon wing tip fuel tanks. The FAA approved Airplane Flight Manual Supplement for this installation states in the limitations section "Auxiliary Wing Tip Tank Fuel to be used in level flight only".(See Copy of FAA approved Airplane Flight Manual Supplement attached to this report.)

Additional aircraft information may be obtained on page 2 of this report under the section titled Aircraft Information.

METEOROLOGICAL INFORMATION

Visual meteorological conditions existed at the time of the accident.

Additional meteorological information may be obtained on page 3 of this report under the section titled Weather Information.

WRECKAGE AND IMPACT INFORMATION

The aircraft wreckage was located about 200 yards southwest of the departure end of runway 27. The aircraft propeller and approximately one third of the aircraft engine were imbedded in the soft terrain.

There was extensive chordwise crushing and buckling of the leading edge of the right wing. The left and right wing tip tanks were separated from the wing tips. There was continuity of the aileron control cables into the cockpit area.

The fuselage was broken just aft of the cabin section. Control continuity from the elevator and rudder was confirmed into the cockpit area.

Inspection of the cockpit area revealed that the fuel selectors were selected to the wing tip tank positions.

Inspection of the aircraft propeller showed no signs of chordwise scratching or twisting of the propeller blades.

Examination of the aircraft engine was conducted after the aircraft was removed to the airport. There was no fuel found in the carburetor or the lines from the engine driven fuel pump to the carburetor. There was no fuel found in the engine driven fuel pump. The engine driven fuel pump operated properly. A small quantity of fuel was found in the electric fuel pump. All fuel lines were checked from the engine back to the fuel sector valves, and no rupture of these lines was found.

There was continuity of the engine drive train. The magnetos produced strong sparks when rotated. The carburetor was damaged during the impact. The spark plugs appeared normal in color when compared to the manufacturers spark plug analysis chart.

MEDICAL AND PATHOLOGICAL INFORMATION

An autopsy of Mr. Ted Douglas Hulon was conducted by Dr. Kenneth E. Warner of the Alabama Department of Forensic Sciences, P.O. Box 2411, Tuscaloosa, Alabama 35403.

A toxicological examination was conducted by the Federal Aviation Administration Toxicology and Accident Research Laboratory, P.O. Box 25082, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73125.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The aircraft wreckage was released to Mr. Don Freeman of the Centreville, Alabama Airport Authority on January 29, 1994.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	44, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land; Multi-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:	Yes
Medical Certification:	Class 3 Valid Medical--w/ waivers/lim	Last FAA Medical Exam:	January 24, 1992
Occupational Pilot:	No	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	1279 hours (Total, all aircraft), 9 hours (Total, this make and model), 1279 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 17 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 12 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	PIPER	Registration:	N6085P
Model/Series:	PA-24-250 PA-24-250	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	24-1183
Landing Gear Type:	Retractable - Tricycle	Seats:	4
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	August 8, 1993 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	3000 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	7 Hrs	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	2934 Hrs	Engine Manufacturer:	LYCOMING
ELT:	Installed, activated, did not aid in locating accident	Engine Model/Series:	O-540
Registered Owner:	HULON, TED D.	Rated Power:	250 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:	ANB ,611 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	70 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	14:51 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	60°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Unknown	Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	Overcast / 25000 ft AGL	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	5 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	300°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	29 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	14°C / 6°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	(0A8)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	ALABASTER , AL (21A)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	14:29 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class D;Class G

Airport Information

Airport:	BIBB COUNTY 0A8	Runway Surface Type:	Asphalt
Airport Elevation:	251 ft msl	Runway Surface Condition:	Dry
Runway Used:	27	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:	4200 ft / 80 ft	VFR Approach/Landing:	Forced landing

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Fatal	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	1 Fatal	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	2 Fatal	Latitude, Longitude:	32.9491,-87.130607(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Sasser, Roff
Additional Participating Persons:	MICHAEL H MORGAN; BIRMINGHAM , AL
Original Publish Date:	May 9, 1995
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=3284

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The NTSB does not assign fault or blame for an accident or incident; rather, as specified by NTSB regulation, “accident/incident investigations are fact-finding proceedings with no formal issues and no adverse parties ... and are not conducted for the purpose of determining the rights or liabilities of any person” (Title 49 *Code of Federal Regulations* section 831.4). Assignment of fault or legal liability is not relevant to the NTSB’s statutory mission to improve transportation safety by investigating accidents and incidents and issuing safety recommendations. In addition, statutory language prohibits the admission into evidence or use of any part of an NTSB report related to an accident in a civil action for damages resulting from a matter mentioned in the report (Title 49 *United States Code* section 1154(b)). A factual report that may be admissible under 49 *United States Code* section 1154(b) is available [here](#).