



# Aviation Investigation Final Report

<b>Location:</b>	FRANKLIN, North Carolina	<b>Accident Number:</b>	ATL95FA054
<b>Date &amp; Time:</b>	February 24, 1995, 17:50 Local	<b>Registration:</b>	N7972Y
<b>Aircraft:</b>	PIPER PA-30B	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Destroyed
<b>Defining Event:</b>		<b>Injuries:</b>	2 Fatal
<b>Flight Conducted Under:</b>	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

## Analysis

AS THE FLIGHT APPROACHED THE DESTINATION AIRPORT, THE PILOT REQUESTED LANDING ADVISORIES; RUNWAY 7 WAS THE ACTIVE RUNWAY. THE PILOT ESTABLISHED A FINAL APPROACH FOR THE OPPOSITE RUNWAY. AS THE AIRPLANE APPROACHED THE MID-FIELD POINT, AND ONLY SEVERAL FEET ABOVE THE GROUND, THE PILOT EXECUTED A SLIGHT CLIMB. THE CLIMB CONTINUED UNTIL THE AIRPLANE WAS BEYOND THE DEPARTURE END RUNWAY 25. AT THIS POINT, THE PILOT ENTERED A STEEP LEFT TURN. THE AIRPLANE COLLIDED WITH THE GROUND 700 FEET BEYOND THE DEPARTURE END OF RUNWAY 25, AND BURNED. AT THE TIME OF THE APPROACH, THE SUN WAS ON THE WESTERN HORIZON. EXAMINATION OF THE ACCIDENT SITE DISCLOSED THAT WRECKAGE DEBRIS WAS SCATTERED OVER AN AREA 90 FEET LONG AND 40 FEET WIDE. THE POST-IMPACT FIRE DESTROYED THE AIRFRAME CENTER SECTION AND EMPENNAGE. THE WRECKAGE EXAMINATION FAILED TO DISCLOSE A MECHANICAL MALFUNCTION.

## Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: THE PILOT'S FAILURE TO MAINTAIN FLYING SPEED RESULTING IN AN AERODYNAMIC STALL. A FACTOR WAS SUNGLARE.

## Findings

Occurrence #1: LOSS OF CONTROL - IN FLIGHT  
Phase of Operation: APPROACH

Findings

1. (C) AIRSPEED - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND
2. (C) STALL - INADVERTENT - PILOT IN COMMAND
3. (F) LIGHT CONDITION - SUNGLARE

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

## Factual Information

### HISTORY OF FLIGHT

On February 24, 1995, at 1750 eastern standard time, a Piper PA-30B, N7972Y, collided with the ground, after the pilot lost control of the airplane while attempting a landing at the Macon County Airport in Franklin, North Carolina. The personal flight operated under the provisions of 14 CFR Part 91, with no flight plan filed. Visual weather conditions prevailed at the time of the accident. The airplane was destroyed by impact forces and a post-impact fire. The pilot and passenger were fatally injured. The exact departure time and location of the flight from Florida were not determined.

After departing the Sarasota, Florida area, no recorded radio contact was reported with N7972y. Airport personnel at Macon County Airport reported that the pilot radioed for landing advisories, and was advised to land on runway 7. Moments later N7972Y was seen east of the airport on what was believed to have been a final approach to runway 25. As the airplane approached the runway, the pilot terminated the final approach 150 feet above the ground, and flew parallel to the runway. The pilot continued the parallel heading until he was beyond the departure end of runway 25.

When the airplane was beyond the departure end of runway 25, the pilot entered a steep left descending turn, and the airplane collided with the ground. Witnesses reported that the pilot never established a go-around climb attitude, and did not retract the landing gear before entering the steep turn.

### PERSONNEL INFORMATION

Information on the pilot is included in this report at the data field labeled "First Pilot Information." The pilot's flight logs were not recovered for examination; pilot flight experience information was never recovered.

### AIRCRAFT INFORMATION

Information on the aircraft is contained in this report at the data field labeled "Aircraft Information." Aircraft maintenance logs were destroyed in the post-impact fire, and some aircraft historical information was not recovered.

### METEOROLOGICAL INFORMATION

Visual weather conditions prevailed at the time of the accident. Weather information is contained in this report at the data field labeled "Weather Information." During the pilot's

modified traffic pattern to runway 7, he flew a westerly head into the sun.

#### WRECKAGE AND IMPACT INFORMATION

The accident site examination revealed that, the airplane impacted the ground 250 feet right of the extended centerline and 700 feet from the end of runway 07. Debris from the left wing tip was found at the first impact point west of the main wreckage. Aircraft wreckage debris was scattered over an area 90 feet long and 40 feet wide. The post-impact fire destroyed the center section of the airframe and the empennage. Emergency locator transmitter (ELT) data was not recovered. Fire damage extended outboard from the wing roots of both wings to about mid-span. Portions of the flight control surfaces were also fire damaged. Propeller blades from both engines sustained impact damage along the leading edges. Despite the extensive fire damage, the examination of the wreckage failed to reveal a mechanical malfunction or system failure.

#### MEDICAL AND PATHOLOGICAL INFORMATION

The postmortem examination on the pilot was performed by Dr. Thomas A. Sporn on February 25, 1995, at the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. The cause of death was reported as massive trauma secondary to the aircraft accident. The toxicological examinations were negative for drugs and alcohol.

#### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

According to airport personnel, the pilot had made several flights into Franklin, and he was familiar with the airport. The traffic pattern flown by the pilot was not in accordance with the normal procedure for a visual approach to runway 7. Airport personnel stated that the downwind leg for a normal traffic pattern for runway 7, extends north between the next two mountain ridges.

The aircraft wreckage was released to:

Mr. Jamie McArthur    5257 Challedon Drive    Virginia Beach, Virginia

## Pilot Information

<b>Certificate:</b>	Private	<b>Age:</b>	46, 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>	Yes
<b>Medical Certification:</b>	Class 3 Valid Medical--no waivers/lim.	<b>Last FAA Medical Exam:</b>	May 17, 1994
<b>Occupational Pilot:</b>	No	<b>Last Flight Review or Equivalent:</b>	
<b>Flight Time:</b>	1500 hours (Total, all aircraft)		

## Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

<b>Aircraft Make:</b>	PIPER	<b>Registration:</b>	N7972Y
<b>Model/Series:</b>	PA-30B PA-30B	<b>Aircraft Category:</b>	Airplane
<b>Year of Manufacture:</b>		<b>Amateur Built:</b>	
<b>Airworthiness Certificate:</b>	Normal	<b>Serial Number:</b>	30-1071
<b>Landing Gear Type:</b>	Retractable - Tricycle	<b>Seats:</b>	6
<b>Date/Type of Last Inspection:</b>	February 24, 1994 Annual	<b>Certified Max Gross Wt.:</b>	3725 lbs
<b>Time Since Last Inspection:</b>		<b>Engines:</b>	2 Reciprocating
<b>Airframe Total Time:</b>	4860 Hrs	<b>Engine Manufacturer:</b>	LYCOMING
<b>ELT:</b>	Installed, not activated	<b>Engine Model/Series:</b>	IO-320-B1A
<b>Registered Owner:</b>	SCN, INC,	<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>	AVL ,2165 ft msl	<b>Distance from Accident Site:</b>	70 Nautical Miles
<b>Observation Time:</b>	18:40 Local	<b>Direction from Accident Site:</b>	80°
<b>Lowest Cloud Condition:</b>	Scattered / 25000 ft AGL	<b>Visibility</b>	20 miles
<b>Lowest Ceiling:</b>	None	<b>Visibility (RVR):</b>	
<b>Wind Speed/Gusts:</b>	14 knots / 24 knots	<b>Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:</b>	/
<b>Wind Direction:</b>	340°	<b>Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:</b>	/
<b>Altimeter Setting:</b>	30 inches Hg	<b>Temperature/Dew Point:</b>	4°C / -6°C
<b>Precipitation and Obscuration:</b>	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
<b>Departure Point:</b>	SARASOTA , FL	<b>Type of Flight Plan Filed:</b>	None
<b>Destination:</b>	(1A5 )	<b>Type of Clearance:</b>	None
<b>Departure Time:</b>	00:00 Local	<b>Type of Airspace:</b>	Class G

## Airport Information

<b>Airport:</b>	MACON COUNTY AIRPORT 1A5	<b>Runway Surface Type:</b>	Asphalt
<b>Airport Elevation:</b>	3020 ft msl	<b>Runway Surface Condition:</b>	Dry
<b>Runway Used:</b>	7	<b>IFR Approach:</b>	None
<b>Runway Length/Width:</b>	4400 ft / 60 ft	<b>VFR Approach/Landing:</b>	Full stop

## Wreckage and Impact Information

<b>Crew Injuries:</b>	1 Fatal	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Destroyed
<b>Passenger Injuries:</b>	1 Fatal	<b>Aircraft Fire:</b>	On-ground
<b>Ground Injuries:</b>	N/A	<b>Aircraft Explosion:</b>	None
<b>Total Injuries:</b>	2 Fatal	<b>Latitude, Longitude:</b>	35.17937,-83.380065(est)

## Administrative Information

<b>Investigator In Charge (IIC):</b>	Powell, Phillip
<b>Additional Participating Persons:</b>	KENT PHILLIPS; CHARLOTTE , NC
<b>Original Publish Date:</b>	October 13, 1995
<b>Last Revision Date:</b>	
<b>Investigation Class:</b>	<a href="#">Class</a>
<b>Note:</b>	
<b>Investigation Docket:</b>	<a href="https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=3472">https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=3472</a>

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) is an independent federal agency charged by Congress with investigating every civil aviation accident in the United States and significant events in other modes of transportation—railroad, transit, highway, marine, pipeline, and commercial space. We determine the probable causes of the accidents and events we investigate, and issue safety recommendations aimed at preventing future occurrences. In addition, we conduct transportation safety research studies and offer information and other assistance to family members and survivors for each accident or event we investigate. We also serve as the appellate authority for enforcement actions involving aviation and mariner certificates issued by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and US Coast Guard, and we adjudicate appeals of civil penalty actions taken by the FAA.

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](#).