



Aviation Investigation Final Report

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|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|------------|
| Location: | SPARTANSBURG, Pennsylvania | Accident Number: | NYC89FA073 |
| Date & Time: | January 26, 1989, 16:23 Local | Registration: | N115DS |
| Aircraft: | GRUMMAN GA-7 | Aircraft Damage: | Destroyed |
| Defining Event: | | Injuries: | 4 Fatal |
| Flight Conducted Under: | Part 91: General aviation - Personal | | |

Analysis

AFTER RECEIVING A WEATHER BRIEFING FROM FSS THE PILOT DECIDED TO FLY INTO KNOWN ICING CONDITIONS WITH AN AIRCRAFT THAT WAS NEITHER CERTIFIED NOR EQUIPPED FOR FLIGHT INTO ICING CONDITIONS. THE AIRCRAFT WAS AT 6,100 FEET WHEN THE PILOT TOLD ATC THAT HE WAS PICKING UP ICE AND NEEDED A HIGHER ALTITUDE. HE WAS CLEARED TO 8,000 FEET. ACCORDING TO ATC RADAR DATA, THE AIRCRAFT REACHED 6,500 FEET, AND 12 SECONDS LATER IT WAS AT 3,500 FEET WHEN RADAR CONTACT WAS LOST. THE AIRCRAFT WAS SEEN IN A HIGH SPEED DIVE AT FULL POWER JUST PRIOR TO IMPACT WITH THE GROUND.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: THE PILOTS DECISION TO DISREGARD THE WEATHER FORECAST AND ATTEMPT FLIGHT INTO KNOWN ICING CONDITIONS. AFTER THE WINGS STARTED TO ICE UP, THE PILOT INITIATED A CLIMB BUT COULD NOT MAINTAIN AIRSPEED AND INADVERTANTLY STALLED THE AIRCRAFT WHICH ENTERED AN UNCONTROLLED HIGH SPEED DESCENT TO THE GROUND.

Findings

Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT ENCOUNTER WITH WEATHER
Phase of Operation: CRUISE - NORMAL

Findings

1. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - ICING CONDITIONS
2. (C) FLIGHT INTO KNOWN ADVERSE WEATHER - ATTEMPTED - PILOT IN COMMAND
3. (C) WEATHER FORECAST - DISREGARDED - PILOT IN COMMAND

Occurrence #2: LOSS OF CONTROL - IN FLIGHT

Phase of Operation: CLIMB

Findings

4. (F) CLIMB - INITIATED - PILOT IN COMMAND
5. (C) AIRSPEED - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND
6. (C) WING - ICE
7. (C) STALL - INADVERTENT - PILOT IN COMMAND

Occurrence #3: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER

Phase of Operation: DESCENT - UNCONTROLLED

Factual Information

Pilot Information

| | | | |
|----------------------------------|--|--|--------------|
| Certificate: | Private | Age: | 54, Male |
| Airplane Rating(s): | Single-engine land; Multi-engine land | Seat Occupied: | Left |
| Other Aircraft Rating(s): | None | Restraint Used: | |
| Instrument Rating(s): | Airplane | Second Pilot Present: | No |
| Instructor Rating(s): | None | Toxicology Performed: | Yes |
| Medical Certification: | Class 2 Valid Medical--no waivers/lim. | Last FAA Medical Exam: | July 7, 1987 |
| Occupational Pilot: | No | Last Flight Review or Equivalent: | |
| Flight Time: | 1510 hours (Total, all aircraft), 780 hours (Total, this make and model), 322 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 23 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 16 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft) | | |

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

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|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Aircraft Make: | GRUMMAN | Registration: | N115DS |
| Model/Series: | GA-7 GA-7 | Aircraft Category: | Airplane |
| Year of Manufacture: | | Amateur Built: | |
| Airworthiness Certificate: | Normal | Serial Number: | GA-70115 |
| Landing Gear Type: | Retractable - Tricycle | Seats: | 4 |
| Date/Type of Last Inspection: | July 15, 1988 Annual | Certified Max Gross Wt.: | 3800 lbs |
| Time Since Last Inspection: | 98 Hrs | Engines: | 2 Reciprocating |
| Airframe Total Time: | 1566 Hrs | Engine Manufacturer: | LYCOMING |
| ELT: | Installed, not activated | Engine Model/Series: | IO-320-D1D |
| Registered Owner: | DAVID W SWEIGART | Rated Power: | 160 Horsepower |
| Operator: | DAVID W. SWEIGART | Operating Certificate(s) Held: | None |
| Operator Does Business As: | ELIZABETHTOWN AIR INC. | Operator Designator Code: | |

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

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|---|-------------------------|---|-------------------|
| Conditions at Accident Site: | Instrument (IMC) | Condition of Light: | Day |
| Observation Facility, Elevation: | ERI ,732 ft msl | Distance from Accident Site: | 25 Nautical Miles |
| Observation Time: | 21:36 Local | Direction from Accident Site: | |
| Lowest Cloud Condition: | Scattered / 1000 ft AGL | Visibility | 2 miles |
| Lowest Ceiling: | Overcast / 1600 ft AGL | Visibility (RVR): | |
| Wind Speed/Gusts: | 8 knots / | Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual: | / |
| Wind Direction: | 230° | Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual: | / |
| Altimeter Setting: | 29 inches Hg | Temperature/Dew Point: | 2°C / 2°C |
| Precipitation and Obscuration: | N/A - None - Fog | | |
| Departure Point: | LANCASTER , PA (LNS) | Type of Flight Plan Filed: | IFR |
| Destination: | SAGINAW , MI (MBS) | Type of Clearance: | IFR |
| Departure Time: | 14:40 Local | Type of Airspace: | Class E |

Airport Information

| | | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------|----------------------------------|------|
| Airport: | | Runway Surface Type: | |
| Airport Elevation: | 0 ft msl | Runway Surface Condition: | |
| Runway Used: | 0 | IFR Approach: | None |
| Runway Length/Width: | 0 ft / 0 ft | VFR Approach/Landing: | None |

Wreckage and Impact Information

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|----------------------------|---------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Crew Injuries: | 1 Fatal | Aircraft Damage: | Destroyed |
| Passenger Injuries: | 3 Fatal | Aircraft Fire: | None |
| Ground Injuries: | N/A | Aircraft Explosion: | None |
| Total Injuries: | 4 Fatal | Latitude, Longitude: | 41.820468,-79.680931 (est) |

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC): Yurman, Alan

Additional Participating Persons:

Original Publish Date: May 22, 1990

Last Revision Date:

Investigation Class: [Class](#)

Note:

Investigation Docket: <https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=36265>

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](#).