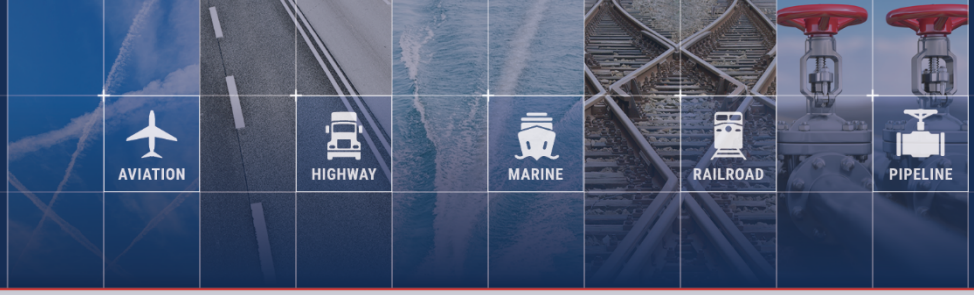

Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	GROTON, Connecticut	**Accident Number:**	NYC92LA020
Date & Time:	October 27, 1991, 18:57 Local	**Registration:**	N14256
Aircraft:	PIPER PA-23-250	**Aircraft Damage:**	Substantial
Defining Event:		**Injuries:**	1 Serious, 2 Minor
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation		

Analysis

THE INSTRUMENT RATED PRIVATE PILOT HAD FLOWN IN IMC CONDITIONS ON TWO IFR FLIGHT PLANS THROUGHOUT THE DAY FROM MIAMI, FLORIDA TO GROTON, CONNECTICUT. HE HAD UPDATED HIS DESTINATION AND ALTERNATE WEATHER WHILE EN ROUTE AND KNEW OF THE CONTINUING CONDITIONS. AFTER REPORTING BABET INTERSECTION AND RECEIVING CLEARANCE FOR THE APPROACH TO LAND FOR RUNWAY 23, THE PILOT DESCENDED THE AIRPLANE TO APPROXIMATELY 680 FEET MSL AND ENGAGED THE AUTOPILOT. THE AIRPLANE DESCENDED SLOWLY BELOW THE MINIMUM DESCENT ALTITUDE AND IMPACTED A WOODED AREA APPROXIMATELY 1.5 MILES FROM THE AIRPORT. THE PILOT WAS VISUALLY SCANNING OUT THE AIRPLANE'S WINDOW AND DID NOT NOTE THE DESCENT BEFORE IMPACT. HE REPORTED NO FAILURES TO ANY AIRPLANE SYSTEM OR RADIOS. THE FAA COORDINATOR FOUND NOTHING UNUSUAL WITH THE AIRPLANE AND DID STATE THAT THE PILOT REPORTED BEING TIRED AT THE TIME OF THE APPROACH. THE MINIMUM DESCENT ALTITUDE WAS 660 FEET.

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 THE MINIMUM DESCENT ALTITUDE DURING THE APPROACH. A FACTOR WAS PILOT FATIGUE.

Findings

Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH OBJECT
Phase of Operation: APPROACH - FAF/OUTER MARKER TO THRESHOLD (IFR)

Findings
1. OBJECT - TREE(S)
2. (C) MINIMUM DESCENT ALTITUDE - PILOT IN COMMAND
3. (F) FATIGUE - PILOT IN COMMAND
4. WEATHER CONDITION - BELOW APPROACH/LANDING MINIMUMS
5. WEATHER CONDITION - FOG

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

Factual Information

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	**Age:**	32,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:**	No
Medical Certification:	Class 2 Valid Medical--w/ waivers/lim	**Last FAA Medical Exam:**	April 12, 1991
Occupational Pilot:	No	**Last Flight Review or Equivalent:**	
Flight Time:	652 hours (Total, all aircraft), 245 hours (Total, this make and model), 558 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 62 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 21 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 3 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	PIPER	**Registration:**	N14256
Model/Series:	PA-23-250 PA-23-250	**Aircraft Category:**	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		**Amateur Built:**	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	**Serial Number:**	27-4818
Landing Gear Type:	Retractable - Tricycle	**Seats:**	6
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	September 25, 1991 Annual	**Certified Max Gross Wt.:**	5200 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	50 Hrs	**Engines:**	2 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	3707 Hrs	**Engine Manufacturer:**	LYCOMING
ELT:		**Engine Model/Series:**	IO-540-C4B5
Registered Owner:	BETTER VAL-U, INC.	**Rated Power:**	250 Horsepower
Operator:	BETTER VAL-U, INC.	**Operating Certificate(s) Held:**	None
Operator Does Business As:		**Operator Designator Code:**	

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Instrument (IMC)	**Condition of Light:**	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	GON ,10 ft msl	**Distance from Accident Site:**	2 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	18:45 Local	**Direction from Accident Site:**	230°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	100 ft AGL	**Visibility**	
Lowest Ceiling:		**Visibility (RVR):**	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	7 knots /	**Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:**	/
Wind Direction:	230°	**Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:**	/
Altimeter Setting:	30 inches Hg	**Temperature/Dew Point:**	15°C / 15°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	N/A - None - Fog		
Departure Point:	N. MYRTLE BEACH, SC (CRE)	**Type of Flight Plan Filed:**	IFR
Destination:		**Type of Clearance:**	IFR
Departure Time:	14:55 Local	**Type of Airspace:**	Class E

Airport Information

Airport:	GROTON-NEW LONDON GON	**Runway Surface Type:**	Asphalt
Airport Elevation:	10 ft msl	**Runway Surface Condition:**	Wet
Runway Used:	23	**IFR Approach:**	VOR
Runway Length/Width:	5000 ft / 150 ft	**VFR Approach/Landing:**	None

Wreckage and Impact Information

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

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Leonard, Charles
Additional Participating Persons:	MAX R SCHMITTER; WINDSOR LOCKS , CT
Original Publish Date:	April 27, 1993
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=37101