



# Aviation Investigation Final Report

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

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## 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

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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

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Occurrence #2: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER

Phase of Operation: DESCENT - UNCONTROLLED

## Factual Information

### Pilot Information

<b>Certificate:</b>	Private	<b>Age:</b>	32, 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>	No
<b>Medical Certification:</b>	Class 2 Valid Medical--w/ waivers/lim	<b>Last FAA Medical Exam:</b>	April 12, 1991
<b>Occupational Pilot:</b>	No	<b>Last Flight Review or Equivalent:</b>	
<b>Flight Time:</b>	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

<b>Aircraft Make:</b>	PIPER	<b>Registration:</b>	N14256
<b>Model/Series:</b>	PA-23-250 PA-23-250	<b>Aircraft Category:</b>	Airplane
<b>Year of Manufacture:</b>		<b>Amateur Built:</b>	
<b>Airworthiness Certificate:</b>	Normal	<b>Serial Number:</b>	27-4818
<b>Landing Gear Type:</b>	Retractable - Tricycle	<b>Seats:</b>	6
<b>Date/Type of Last Inspection:</b>	September 25, 1991 Annual	<b>Certified Max Gross Wt.:</b>	5200 lbs
<b>Time Since Last Inspection:</b>	50 Hrs	<b>Engines:</b>	2 Reciprocating
<b>Airframe Total Time:</b>	3707 Hrs	<b>Engine Manufacturer:</b>	LYCOMING
<b>ELT:</b>		<b>Engine Model/Series:</b>	IO-540-C4B5
<b>Registered Owner:</b>	BETTER VAL-U, INC.	<b>Rated Power:</b>	250 Horsepower
<b>Operator:</b>	BETTER VAL-U, INC.	<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>	Instrument (IMC)	<b>Condition of Light:</b>	Day
<b>Observation Facility, Elevation:</b>	GON ,10 ft msl	<b>Distance from Accident Site:</b>	2 Nautical Miles
<b>Observation Time:</b>	18:45 Local	<b>Direction from Accident Site:</b>	230°
<b>Lowest Cloud Condition:</b>	100 ft AGL	<b>Visibility</b>	
<b>Lowest Ceiling:</b>		<b>Visibility (RVR):</b>	
<b>Wind Speed/Gusts:</b>	7 knots /	<b>Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:</b>	/
<b>Wind Direction:</b>	230°	<b>Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:</b>	/
<b>Altimeter Setting:</b>	30 inches Hg	<b>Temperature/Dew Point:</b>	15°C / 15°C
<b>Precipitation and Obscuration:</b>	N/A - None - Fog		
<b>Departure Point:</b>	N. MYRTLE BEACH, SC (CRE)	<b>Type of Flight Plan Filed:</b>	IFR
<b>Destination:</b>		<b>Type of Clearance:</b>	IFR
<b>Departure Time:</b>	14:55 Local	<b>Type of Airspace:</b>	Class E

## Airport Information

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

## Wreckage and Impact Information

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

## Administrative Information

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