



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	TUSCALOOSA, Alabama	Accident Number:	ATL96LA121
Date & Time:	August 18, 1996, 18:59 Local	Registration:	N4405E
Aircraft:	Piper PA-38-112	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	2 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

According to the pilot, the airplane collided with a relay antenna during maneuvering flight as he searched for a friend's home. After the collision, the pilot regained control of the airplane and returned to the departure airport. No mechanical problems with the airplane were reported by the pilot.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The pilot's failure to see and avoid an antenna during low altitude maneuvering.

Findings

Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH OBJECT
Phase of Operation: MANEUVERING

Findings

1. OBJECT - ANTENNA
2. (C) VISUAL LOOKOUT - INADEQUATE - PILOT IN COMMAND

Factual Information

On August 18, 1996, at 1859 central daylight time, a Piper PA-38 N4405E, collided with a State Police relay antenna about 300 above the ground five miles east of Tuscaloosa, Alabama. The personal flight operated under the provisions of Title 14 CFR Part 91 with no flight plan filed. Visual weather conditions prevailed at the time of the accident. The airplane received substantial damage, and the pilot and passenger were not injured. The flight departed Tuscaloosa at 1830.

According to the pilot, the collision occurred as he searched for a friend's home in the vicinity of the relay antenna. After the collision, the pilot regained control of the airplane and returned to Tuscaloosa. No mechanical problems with the airplane were reported by the pilot. .

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	22, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-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:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 3 Valid Medical--no waivers/lim.	Last FAA Medical Exam:	August 31, 1995
Occupational Pilot:	UNK	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	173 hours (Total, all aircraft), 18 hours (Total, this make and model), 141 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 5 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 1 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Piper	Registration:	N4405E
Model/Series:	PA-38-112 PA-38-112	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	38-78A0594
Landing Gear Type:	Tricycle	Seats:	2
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	June 3, 1996 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	1670 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	24 Hrs	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	4603 Hrs	Engine Manufacturer:	Lycoming
ELT:	Installed, activated, did not aid in locating accident	Engine Model/Series:	O-235-L2A
Registered Owner:	GLENN PLUGGE	Rated Power:	112 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:	TCL ,170 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	
Observation Time:	19:13 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	4 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	360°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	32°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	(TCL)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:		Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	18:30 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Airport Information

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

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	2 None	Latitude, Longitude:	33.219615,-87.479591(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Powell, Phillip
Additional Participating Persons:	JACK F KEESEY; BIRMINGHAM , AL
Original Publish Date:	February 18, 1997
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=3754

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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](#).