



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	BELLEAIR, Florida	Accident Number:	MIA94LA138
Date & Time:	May 13, 1994, 12:10 Local	Registration:	N114WW
Aircraft:	PIPER J3C-65	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	1 Minor
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation		

Analysis

The pilot observed engine oil leaking onto the windshield. He dropped the aerial advertising banner he was towing on to a golf course and then performed a precautionary landing on the golf course. During landing rollout the aircraft collided with two trees. Postcrash examination of the engine indicated the front crankshaft seal was partially dislodged and causing the oil leakage. The engine crankcase breather line was found partially blocked with oil sludge and debris. No other evidence of failure or malfunction was noted in the engine.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: IMPROPER MAINTENANCE INSPECTION OF THE CRANKCASE BREATHER TUBE RESULTING IN FAILURE TO DETECT BLOCKAGE OF THE TUBE.

Findings

Occurrence #1: ON GROUND/WATER COLLISION WITH OBJECT
Phase of Operation: LANDING - ROLL

Findings

1. ENGINE ASSEMBLY, OTHER - BLOCKED(PARTIAL)
2. (C) MAINTENANCE, INSPECTION - INADEQUATE - COMPANY MAINTENANCE PERSONNEL
3. ENGINE ASSEMBLY, CRANKCASE - PRESSURE EXCESSIVE
4. LUBRICATING SYSTEM, OIL SEAL - LOSS, PARTIAL
5. FLUID, OIL - LOSS, PARTIAL

6. PRECAUTIONARY LANDING - PERFORMED - PILOT IN COMMAND
7. OBJECT - TREE(S)

Factual Information

On May 13, 1994, about 1210 eastern daylight time, a Piper J3C-65, N114WW, registered to Thomas W. Merrifield, collided with trees during a precautionary landing on a golf course near Belleair, Florida, while on a 14 CFR Part 91 banner towing flight. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed at the time and no flight plan was filed. The airplane was substantially damaged and the commercial-rated pilot sustained minor injuries. The flight originated at St. Petersburg, Florida, on May 13, 1994, about.

The pilot stated that about 15 minutes after takeoff the engine began to lose oil. He released the banner and initiated a descent to land on a golf course with the windshield covered by oil. After touchdown he observed a ditch ahead and added power to clear it. He was then unable to stop before colliding with trees.

Postcrash examination of the engine by FAA inspectors indicated the engine front crankshaft seal was partially dislodged causing the oil leakage. The engine case breather line was found partially blocked by oil sludge and debris. No other evidence of failure or malfunction was noted.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial	Age:	41, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Front
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 2 Valid Medical--no waivers/lim.	Last FAA Medical Exam:	May 11, 1994
Occupational Pilot:	Yes	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	4500 hours (Total, all aircraft), 3000 hours (Total, this make and model), 4400 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 331 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 98 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 5 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	PIPER	Registration:	N114WW
Model/Series:	J3C-65 J3C-65	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	17908
Landing Gear Type:	Tailwheel	Seats:	2
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	April 9, 1994 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	1250 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	90 Hrs	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	8660 Hrs	Engine Manufacturer:	LYCOMING
ELT:	Not installed	Engine Model/Series:	O-320A
Registered Owner:	THOMAS W. MERRIFIELD	Rated Power:	150 Horsepower
Operator:		Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None
Operator Does Business As:	ADVERTISING AIR FORCE, INC.	Operator Designator Code:	

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	SPG ,8 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	15 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	12:51 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	150°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Scattered / 2000 ft AGL	Visibility	5 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	6 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	120°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	29 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	30°C / 21°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:		Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:		Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	11:55 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Airport Information

Airport:		Runway Surface Type:	Grass/turf
Airport Elevation:		Runway Surface Condition:	Dry
Runway Used:	0	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:		VFR Approach/Landing:	Precautionary landing

Wreckage and Impact Information

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

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Kennedy, Jeffrey
Additional Participating Persons:	JESSE BARRINGTON; ORLANDO , FL
Original Publish Date:	November 18, 1994
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=37544

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