



AVIATION



HIGHWAY



MARINE



RAILROAD



PIPELINE

Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	LANSING, North Carolina	Accident Number:	MIA98FA039
Date & Time:	December 2, 1997, 13:15 Local	Registration:	N9613P
Aircraft:	Christen Industries A-1	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Defining Event:		Injuries:	1 Fatal
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The airplane was seen flying low, in a westerly direction, through a valley about 5 miles west of the departure airport. The airplane struck a utility wire that stretched north and south across the valley and a road. The airplane then continued on a heading of 340 degrees for about 500 feet where the right wing separated from the airframe. The airplane came to rest about 300 feet south of a private home, in the front yard. The home was owned by the the pilot/owner's cousin. Two men sitting in a pickup truck near the crash site said in a statement to police, they were in the truck with the engine off and the windows down. The driver said they were sitting there for about 5 minutes when he looked out his left window and saw the airplane coming toward them. The driver said he 'does not recall hearing the engine running' on the airplane as it was coming down. The driver told his passenger to 'duck he's going to hit us.' In addition, the truck's driver said, '...he [saw] the right wing hit a cable,' and then come off just before impact with the ground. Local residents said that the pilot/owner of the airplane lived in a house a short distance west of the crash site, and had flown around the area often. The airplane had not been seen in the area on the day of the accident. It was revealed that rescue workers had remove the utility wire that was wrapped around the airframe in order to extract the victim from the cockpit. The wire was found lying to the right rear of the airplane. The right wing had separated from the airframe and was located east of the main wreckage. The right wing displayed wire strike marks on the wing strut. The strut was found separated from the wing. Examination of the engine and propeller did not reveal any discrepancies.

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 clearance from a wire.

Findings

Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH OBJECT

Phase of Operation: OTHER

Findings

1. OBJECT - WIRE,STATIC
2. (C) CLEARANCE - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND

Factual Information

HISTORY OF FLIGHT

On December 2, 1997, about 1315 standard daylight time, a Christen Industries A-1, N9613P, registered to a private owner, and operating as a Title 14 CFR Part 91, personal flight, impacted with wires, and came to rest in the front yard of a private home near Lansing, North Carolina. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed and no flight plan was filed. The airplane was destroyed. The private pilot was fatally injured. There were no injuries to any persons on the ground. The flight had departed from Ashe County Airport, about 1305.

The airplane was seen flying low in a westerly direction, through a valley, in hilly and rolling terrain, about 5 miles west of the departure airport. Two men sitting in a pickup truck near the crash site said in a statement to police, they were in the truck with the engine off and the windows down. The driver said they were sitting there for about 5 minutes when he looked out his left window and saw the airplane coming toward them. The driver said he "does not recall hearing the engine running" on the airplane as it was coming down. The driver told his passenger to "duck he's going to hit us." In addition, the truck's driver said, "...he [saw] the right wing hit a cable," and then come off the airplane just before impact with the ground.

Local residents said that the pilot/owner of the airplane lived in a house a short distance west of the crash site, and had flown around the area often. The airplane had not been seen in the area on the day of the accident.

The accident occurred during the hours of daylight about 36 degrees, 25 minutes north, and 081 degrees, 25 minutes west.

PERSONNEL INFORMATION

Information on the pilot is contained in this report on page 3, under First Pilot Information.

METEOROLOGICAL INFORMATION

Visual meteorological conditions prevailed at the time of the accident. Meteorological information is contained in this report on page 3, under Weather Information.

MEDICAL AND PATHOLOGICAL INFORMATION

An autopsy was performed on the pilot, on December 3, 1997, at the Baptist Hospital, Winston-Salem, North Carolina, by Dr. Pat Lantz.

Toxicological tests were conducted at the Federal Aviation Administration, Research Laboratory, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, and revealed, "no alcohol or drugs."

WRECKAGE AND IMPACT INFORMATION

The airplane struck a utility wire that stretched north and south across a valley and a road. The airplane then continued on a heading of 340 degrees for about 500 feet, where the right wing separated from the airframe. The airplane continued to travel about 130 feet in a westerly direction coming to rest about 300 feet south of a private home, in the front yard. The home was owned by the by the pilot/owner's cousin.

Examination of the wreckage revealed that rescue workers had removed the utility wire that was wrapped around the airframe in order to extract the victim from the cockpit. The wire was found lying to the right rear of the airplane. The left wing was still attached to the airframe. The right wing had separated from the airframe and was located east of the main wreckage. The right wing displayed wire strike marks on the wing strut. The strut was found separated from the wing.

The cockpit area was crushed upward and rearward at the floor. Both main landing gear were found broken off their attaching points. The engine and propeller were found attached. The engine was bent downward at the firewall, and was still attached to the fuselage. Fuel was found at the crash site and a fixed-base operator at the Ash County Airport reported that 20 gallons of fuel was put into the fuel tanks before the flight.

The engine and propeller were removed from the airframe and taken to the Ash County Airport where they were examined. Examination of the engine revealed that the crankshaft propeller flange had broken. Both magnetos were in place and attached to the accessory case. A hole was found in the oil sump and the sump displayed impact damage. No oil was found in the sump. The exhaust system was crushed as was the cylinder No. 2 intake pipe. The carburetor was found broken off at the throat. The throttle control was attached, and the control rod was broken. The mixture control shaft was bent, and the control cable was detached.

The propeller was removed from the engine. The engine was rotated by hand and thumb compression was noted on all four cylinders. The engine rotated freely. Continuity to the accessory gears and valve action was confirmed.

Examination of the propeller blades revealed that one blade was found straight with no chordwise marks observed. The blade had nicks and gouges at the blade tip and along the leading edge. The other blade was found bent rearward about mid-span of the blade. The blade displayed chordwise scratches, gouges and nicks at the tip and along the leading edge.

The magnetos were removed from the engine, and both magnetos rotated freely by

hand. Both magnetos also produced spark from all four posts when rotated.

The carburetor was examined and disassembled. The exterior examination revealed that the valve was found about 3/4 closed. The carburetor arm was broken and found in the closed position. The mixture arm was broken and its position was not determined. The carburetor was dissembled. Fuel was found in the bowl, and the fuel was tested for water using water finding paste. No water was found. The metal floats moved freely, the needle valve was in place, and moved freely. There were no discrepancies found with the engine, propeller or any of the accessories that were examined.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The aircraft wreckage was released to Mr. James T Brewer, adjuster for the owner's insurance company, on December 4, 1997.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	51,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:	Yes
Medical Certification:	Class 2 Valid Medical--w/ waivers/lim	Last FAA Medical Exam:	August 29, 1997
Occupational Pilot:	UNK	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	934 hours (Total, all aircraft), 7 hours (Total, this make and model), 40 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 21 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 1 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Christen Industries	Registration:	N9613P
Model/Series:	A-1 A-1	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	1173
Landing Gear Type:	Tailwheel	Seats:	2
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	December 5, 1996 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	1500 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	48 Hrs	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	475 Hrs	Engine Manufacturer:	Lycoming
ELT:	Installed, not activated	Engine Model/Series:	O-360-C1G
Registered Owner:	JAMES ALLEN POWERS	Rated Power:	180 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:	TRI ,1519 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	30 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	12:53 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	280°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	5 knots / None	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	20°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	9°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	(NC67)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:		Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	13:05 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class D

Airport Information

Airport:	ASHE COUNTY NC67	Runway Surface Type:	
Airport Elevation:	3180 ft msl	Runway Surface Condition:	
Runway Used:	0	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:		VFR Approach/Landing:	None

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Fatal	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Passenger Injuries:		Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 Fatal	Latitude, Longitude:	36.490432,-81.499473(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Yurman, Alan
Additional Participating Persons:	ROBERT HILL; WINSTON-SALEM , NC GERALD R JAMES; DALLAS , TX
Original Publish Date:	November 6, 1998
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=38381

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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](#).