



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Morristown, Vermont	Accident Number:	NYC98LA182
Date & Time:	September 6, 1998, 09:30 Local	Registration:	N26712
Aircraft:	Piper J3L-65	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	2 Serious
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Instructional		

Analysis

The private pilot was receiving flight instruction from the CFI. He performed a touch and go landing, and a witness located at the end of the runway said the airplane looked very low, and was not more than 20 feet above the ground during the climb out. The airplane remained low and then made a left turn. During the turn, the airplane pitched down and impacted a rural road, at 'more than a 45 degree angle.' Examination of the wreckage did not reveal any pre-impact malfunctions, however, it was noted that the wooden propeller remained intact, and the propeller damage appeared to be caused by forward motion. Review of an FAA Carburetor Icing Probability Chart placed the temperature and dewpoint recorded at an airport about 2 miles from the accident site, in the 'serious icing at glide power' range. Neither occupant was able to remember any details surrounding the flight or accident.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: A loss of engine power for undetermined reasons.

Findings

Occurrence #1: LOSS OF ENGINE POWER
Phase of Operation: CLIMB

Findings

1. REASON FOR OCCURRENCE UNDETERMINED

Occurrence #2: FORCED LANDING
Phase of Operation: DESCENT - EMERGENCY

Occurrence #3: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER
Phase of Operation: EMERGENCY LANDING

Findings
2. TERRAIN CONDITION - ROADWAY/HIGHWAY

Factual Information

On September 6, 1998, about 0930 eastern daylight time, a Piper J3L-65, N26712, was substantially damaged while maneuvering after a touch and go landing at the Perras Field Airport (VT44), Morrisville, Vermont. The certificated flight instructor (CFI), and the certificated private pilot were seriously injured. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed and no flight plan had been filed for the instructional flight that originated at the Morrisville-Stowe State Airport (MVL), about 0900. The flight was conducted under 14 CFR Part 91.

According to the airplane's operator, the private pilot was receiving flight instruction in the tail-wheeled airplane from the CFI. The operator also observed the airplane perform two touch and go landings at MVL, before he went inside, to his office.

Witnesses near VT44, observed the airplane perform a touch and go landing on runway 16, a 2,000 foot long, turf runway.

A witness near the airport stated he saw the airplane landing and it looked like it was "fighting the crosswind." The airplane bounced a couple of times and then started to climb. During the climb, he heard the airplane's engine "sputtering and choking." He last observed the airplane, 20 to 25 feet above the corn field located at the departure end of the runway.

A witness who was located at the end of the runway stated the airplane came overhead and the persons in the airplane waved to him. The airplane looked "very low," and was "not more than 20 feet above the ground." The airplane remained "pretty low," and then made a left turn. During the turn, the airplane pitched down and impacted the ground at "more than a 45 degree angle." When asked to describe the engine noise, he stated the engine sounded loud and he did not hear any sputtering; however, he also stated that he was standing near an operating tractor which made it difficult to hear.

Neither occupant was able to remember any details surrounding the flight or accident.

The airplane impacted and came to rest, on a rural road, about 1/4 mile from VT44.

Examination of the wreckage was performed by a Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Inspector. Flight control continuity was confirmed from the cockpit controls to their respective control surfaces. Compression was obtained on all engine cylinders, and there was no fouling of the spark plugs noted. Due to the position of the engine, the carburetor, which had separated during the impact, and the magnetos, which were pressed against the firewall, could not be examined. The airplane's wooden propeller remained intact and the Inspector noted that the propeller damage appeared to be caused by forward motion. The engine was retained, and shipped to its manufacturer, Textron Lycoming, Williamsport, Pennsylvania, for further

examination.

The engine was disassembled under the supervision of an FAA Inspector, and there were no discrepancies noted. Additionally, during the disassembly both magnetos were rotated by hand and produced spark.

Examination of the carburetor by an FAA Inspector did not reveal any pre-impact malfunctions. The float chamber, metering jets, and air orifices were absent of debris.

The fuel line from the fuel tank to engine had been compromised, and the amount of fuel which remained in the airplane at the time of the accident could not be verified. According to the airplane's "sign out" log, the airplane was last flown on September 4, 1998, for 1.4 hours, and was returned with a tachometer time of 380.89. The pilot did not report any problems with the airplane after the flight, and stated he added 5.5 gallons of gasoline to the fuel tank, which "completely filled the tank." The refueling was not indicated on the airplane's refueling log.

The tachometer at the accident site was 381.48.

According to maintenance records, the airplane had accumulated about 44 hours of operation since it's last annual inspection, which was performed on May 22, 1998.

The private pilot reported about 72 hours of total flight experience, of which, 11 hours were in the make and model of the accident airplane.

According to the aircraft operator, the CFI had 631.8 hours of total flight experience, of which, 30.5 hours were in the make and model of the accident airplane.

The weather reported at MVL, which was located about 2 miles west-northwest of the accident site at 0954, was:

Winds 210 at 8 knots; Visibility 10 statute miles; Clear Skies, Temperature 73 degrees F; Dewpoint 57 degrees F; Altimeter 29.81 in/Hg.

Review of an FAA Carburetor Icing Probability Chart placed the temperature and dewpoint recorded at MVL, in the "serious icing on glide power" range.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial	Age:	51, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land; Single-engine sea; Multi-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	Glider	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	Second Pilot Present:	Yes
Instructor Rating(s):	Airplane single-engine; Instrument airplane	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 2 Valid Medical—no waivers/lim.	Last FAA Medical Exam:	September 29, 1997
Occupational Pilot:	UNK	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	632 hours (Total, all aircraft), 31 hours (Total, this make and model), 435 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 145 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 34 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Piper	Registration:	N26712
Model/Series:	J3L-65 J3L-65	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	4129
Landing Gear Type:	Tailwheel	Seats:	2
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	May 22, 1998 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	1100 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	44 Hrs	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	2020 Hrs	Engine Manufacturer:	Lycoming
ELT:		Engine Model/Series:	O-145-B2
Registered Owner:	EDWARD W. SCOTT	Rated Power:	65 Horsepower
Operator:	WHITCOMB AVIATION INC.	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:	MVL ,732 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	2 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	09:54 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	290°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	8 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	210°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	29 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	23°C / 14°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	, VT (MVL)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	(VT44)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	09:00 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Airport Information

Airport:	PERRAS FIELD AIRPORT VT44	Runway Surface Type:	Grass/turf
Airport Elevation:	820 ft msl	Runway Surface Condition:	Dry
Runway Used:	16	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:	2000 ft / 50 ft	VFR Approach/Landing:	Touch and go

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Serious	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	1 Serious	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	2 Serious	Latitude, Longitude:	44.561752,-72.598816(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Schiada, Luke
Additional Participating Persons:	ARNIE SILVERSTONE; PORTLAND , MA ROBERT C OHNMEISS; WILLIAMSPORT , PA
Original Publish Date:	April 20, 2000
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=43948

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