



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	MINERAL WELLS, Texas	Incident Number:	FTW99IA024
Date & Time:	November 10, 1998, 10:30 Local	Registration:	N4927P
Aircraft:	Piper PA-23-235	Aircraft Damage:	None
Defining Event:		Injuries:	1 Fatal, 2 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The pilot rated passenger stated that, the multi-engine airplane was within 5 nautical miles of the airport and the pilot-in-command (PIC) was maneuvering the airplane on a VOR approach (practice instrument approach). The PIC maneuvered the airplane into a descending left turn to remain on course. 'Within two to three seconds,' the airplane entered a 'steep descent.' The PIC entered a state of unconsciousness and, subsequently, died. The 600 hour pilot rated passenger, who was rated to fly single engine aircraft, took control of the airplane. The passenger who was seated in the rear of the airplane contacted personnel at the airport over the Unicom frequency. He requested that emergency personnel be contacted and requested that a multi-engine rated pilot assist the pilot with landing procedures. The pilot rated passenger, assisted by an airline pilot via radio, landed the airplane without incident and emergency medical personnel met the airplane. Autopsy findings showed that the PIC (who held a valid third class medical certificate) died of a heart attack.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this incident to be: The pilot-in-command's incapacitation due to cardiovascular disease.

Findings

Occurrence #1: MISCELLANEOUS/OTHER
Phase of Operation: APPROACH

Findings

1. RELINQUISHING OF CONTROL - INITIATED - PILOT PASSENGER
2. (C) INCAPACITATION - PILOT IN COMMAND

Factual Information

On November 10, 1998, 1030 central standard time, a Piper, PA-23-235 multi-engine airplane, N4927P, was landed without incident by a pilot rated passenger, when the pilot-in-command (owner of the airplane) became incapacitated, while on a practice VOR approach to the Mineral Wells Airport, near Mineral Wells, Texas. The pilot rated passenger and an additional passenger were not injured. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed and no flight plan was filed for the Title 14 CFR Part 91 personal flight. The flight originated from the Mineral Wells Airport, approximately 0930.

According to the pilot rated passenger, who was seated in the right front seat, the airplane was within 5 nautical miles of the airport and the pilot-in-command was maneuvering the airplane on a VOR approach (practice instrument approach). The pilot rated passenger stated that the pilot indicated that he was going to maneuver the airplane into a descending left turn to remain on course. "Within two to three seconds," the airplane entered a "steep descent." The pilot-in-command entered a state of unconsciousness and, subsequently, died.

The 600 hour pilot rated passenger, who was rated to fly single engine aircraft, took control of the airplane. The passenger who was seated in the rear of the airplane contacted personnel at the Mineral Wells Airport over the Unicom frequency. He requested that emergency personnel be contacted and requested that a multi-engine rated pilot assist the pilot with landing procedures. The pilot rated passenger was assisted by an airline pilot via radio who was on the ground at the Mineral Wells Airport. Subsequently, the airplane landed on runway 31 without incident and emergency medical personnel met the airplane.

A retired airline pilot who was on the ground at the Mineral Wells Airport reported that he assisted the pilot rated passenger with landing procedures including airspeeds, mixture, and propeller control settings.

The pilot rated passenger reported that the day before the accident he assisted the pilot-in-command move a "heavy tablesaw" and he appeared normal. He then saw the pilot-in-command the morning of the accident. They had a cup of coffee together and performed the preflight inspection of the airplane. During that time pilot appeared normal and did not express any discomfort.

The pilot-in-command's wife reported that she saw her husband the morning of the accident and he appeared normal and did not communicate any discomfort to her.

The 63 year old, 30,000 hour pilot-in-command, who was a former airline captain, held a valid third class medical certificate, issued January 20, 1998. According to FAA medical records, no EKG defect codes were entered by the examining physician. Information obtained on the

pilot's personal medical history showed that he had visited a doctor in September of 1998. Memos from the doctor indicated that the pilot had high cholesterol, elevated blood sugar, and was prescribed diet and allergy medications.

Results of an autopsy performed on the pilot showed that he died of natural cause. The findings were that the pilot had Atherosclerotic Cardiovascular Disease, and Cardiomegaly with Biventricular Dialation.

Toxicology tests were negative.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	63, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land; Multi-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	None	Second Pilot Present:	Yes
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	Yes
Medical Certification:	Class 3 Valid Medical--w/ waivers/lim	Last FAA Medical Exam:	January 20, 1998
Occupational Pilot:	No	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	30000 hours (Total, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Piper	Registration:	N4927P
Model/Series:	PA-23-235 PA-23-235	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	27-512
Landing Gear Type:	Retractable - Tricycle	Seats:	5
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	Unknown	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	4800 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	2 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:		Engine Manufacturer:	Continental
ELT:	Installed, not activated	Engine Model/Series:	O-540
Registered Owner:	ROBERT R. BEAN	Rated Power:	235 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:	MWL ,972 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	5 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	09:54 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	360°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Visibility	20 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	12 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	330°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	12°C / -2°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	(MWL)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:		Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	09:30 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class E

Airport Information

Airport:	MINERAL WELLS MWL	Runway Surface Type:	Asphalt
Airport Elevation:	972 ft msl	Runway Surface Condition:	Dry
Runway Used:	31	IFR Approach:	
Runway Length/Width:	5094 ft / 150 ft	VFR Approach/Landing:	Full stop

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Fatal, 1 None	Aircraft Damage:	None
Passenger Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 Fatal, 2 None	Latitude, Longitude:	32.820339,-98.069068(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC): Lemishko, Alexander
Additional Participating Persons: CURT MAHAFFEY; FORT WORTH , TX

Original Publish Date: September 28, 1999

Last Revision Date:

Investigation Class: [Class](#)

Note:

Investigation Docket: <https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=45284>

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](#).