



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	CLAREMORE, Oklahoma	Accident Number:	FTW99LA129
Date & Time:	May 1, 1999, 19:18 Local	Registration:	N3732C
Aircraft:	Piper J3C-65	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Defining Event:		Injuries:	2 Serious
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The pilot rated passenger (PRP) was flying the airplane from the rear seat, and was on final approach to land to the north at a grass strip. The PRP turned the airplane to the northeast when he observed an ultralight departing the grass strip to the south. At that point the commercial pilot in the front seat took control of the airplane and pitched the airplane's 'nose up to climb a little and reduce speed.' He was turning the airplane left from downwind to base when the airplane's 'nose pitched down sharply and impacted the ground.' The pilot reported that as the airplane turned, the 'engine died,' and he continued turning toward an open area. Examination of the wreckage revealed that one propeller blade 'exhibited evidence of power.' There were also deep gouges in the ground that 'appear to be propeller slashes.' Continuity was established to all flight controls. The PRP stated that 'he did not observe any problems with the aircraft or engine performance.'

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 minimum airspeed for flight while maneuvering, which resulted in an inadvertent stall.

Findings

Occurrence #1: LOSS OF CONTROL - IN FLIGHT
Phase of Operation: APPROACH - VFR PATTERN - BASE TURN

Findings

1. (C) AIRSPEED(VS) - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND
2. STALL - INADVERTENT - PILOT IN COMMAND

Occurrence #2: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER
Phase of Operation: DESCENT - UNCONTROLLED

Factual Information

On May 1, 1999, about 1918 central daylight time, a Piper J3C-65 airplane, N3732C, registered to and operated by Sam Riggs Flying Service, Inc., of Claremore, Oklahoma, was destroyed by a fire following terrain impact while maneuvering in the traffic pattern at the Sam Riggs Airpark near Claremore. The commercial pilot and his pilot rated passenger were seriously injured. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed, and a flight plan was not filed for the 14 Code of Federal Regulations Part 91 personal flight. The local flight originated from the Sam Riggs Airpark at 1830.

The commercial pilot reported in the Pilot/Operator Aircraft Accident Report, NTSB Form 6120.1/2, that when the pilot rated passenger aligned the aircraft with runway 36 for landing, "an ultralight did a very aggressive landing procedure." The pilot further reported that he "took sole command of the aircraft," and flew to the east side of the runway for "a downwind leg" to land south. As the aircraft approached a road, which crosses the approach end of the runway, he "pitched the nose up to climb a little and reduce speed." He then "turned for a rounded base and final." As the aircraft turned, the "engine died," and he "continued to turn to get to open ground." He attempted an emergency landing, but the aircraft "hit too hard."

The pilot rated passenger reported to the FAA inspector that he was in the back seat and was landing the aircraft to the north on a grass strip. The aircraft was approximately 50 feet above a line of trees that run east and west when he "noticed an ultralight taking off to the south on the same runway." He then made a right turn to 040 degrees and leveled off. The passenger further reported that the pilot in the front seat "took over control of the aircraft and pitched the nose up and began a left turn to land to the south." He "noticed that the airspeed was low and then the aircraft began to stall." The pilot was able to get the wings level before the aircraft's "nose pitched down sharply and impacted the ground." The passenger stated that "he did not observe any problems with the aircraft or engine performance."

Examination of the aircraft wreckage by the FAA inspector revealed that the inboard section of both wings and the fuselage, except for the tail, were destroyed by fire. One propeller blade was destroyed by fire, and the other blade "exhibited evidence of power." There were also deep gouges in the ground that "appear to be propeller slashes." Continuity was established to all flight controls.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial	Age:	26, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land; Single-engine sea	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 4, 1998
Occupational Pilot:	UNK	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	443 hours (Total, all aircraft), 19 hours (Total, this make and model), 365 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 38 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 7 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 1 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Piper	Registration:	N3732C
Model/Series:	J3C-65 J3C-65	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	13603
Landing Gear Type:	Tailwheel	Seats:	2
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	April 19, 1999 100 hour	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	1220 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	105 Hrs	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	6327 Hrs	Engine Manufacturer:	Continental
ELT:	Not installed	Engine Model/Series:	M-A-65-8
Registered Owner:	SAM RIGGS FLYING SERVICE, INC.	Rated Power:	65 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:	Dusk
Observation Facility, Elevation:		Distance from Accident Site:	
Observation Time:		Direction from Accident Site:	
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Visibility	15 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	4 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	270°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:		Temperature/Dew Point:	23°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	(K11)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:		Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	18:30 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Airport Information

Airport:	SAM RIGGS AIRPARK K11	Runway Surface Type:	Grass/turf
Airport Elevation:	580 ft msl	Runway Surface Condition:	Dry
Runway Used:	36	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:	1550 ft / 110 ft	VFR Approach/Landing:	Traffic pattern

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Serious	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Passenger Injuries:	1 Serious	Aircraft Fire:	On-ground
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	2 Serious	Latitude, Longitude:	36.309165,-95.610702(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Wigington, Douglas
Additional Participating Persons:	TERRY CARR; OKLAHOMA CITY , OK
Original Publish Date:	June 21, 2000
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=46229

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](#).