



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	PLYMOUTH, Massachusetts	Accident Number:	NYC99FAMS3
Date & Time:	May 6, 1999, 15:18 Local	Registration:	N8235Z
Aircraft:	Piper PA28RT-201T	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Defining Event:		Injuries:	1 Fatal
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The pilot departed under visual flight rules. There was no known weather briefing obtained by the pilot, flight plan filed, or communications with the airplane after departure, which disappeared from radar about 30 minutes after takeoff. Visual metrological conditions prevailed at the time of the takeoff; however, instrument meteorological conditions were present at an airport about 5 miles northeast of the airplane's last recorded radar position. Neither the pilot nor airplane were located. The pilot held an instrument rating and reported 2,900 hours of total flight experience on his most recent application for an FAA medical certificate, which was issued about a year prior to the accident.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: undetermined (missing airplane)

Findings

Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER
Phase of Operation: MANEUVERING

Findings

1. (C) REASON FOR OCCURRENCE UNDETERMINED

Factual Information

On May 6, 1999, about 1518 eastern daylight time, a Piper PA 28RT-201T, N8235Z, was presumed destroyed when it disappeared from radar, near Plymouth, Massachusetts. As of February 11, 2003, the airplane had not been located, and the certificated private pilot was presumed fatal. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed at the time of the takeoff, and no flight plan had been filed for the flight that departed the Norwood Memorial Airport (OWD), about 1445. The personal flight was conducted under 14 CFR Part 91.

There were no known communications with the airplane.

Air traffic control radar began tracking a target with a transponder code of 1200 in the Norwood area, about the same time the missing airplane was suspected of departing. The target tracked southbound to a point 5 miles south of the Taunton Airport, then turned eastbound at 1506:02. At that time, the altitude of the target was 1,100 feet. At 1506:14, at 41 degrees, 49 minutes, 83 seconds, north latitude, and 70 degrees, 49 minutes, 22 seconds, west longitude, radar contact was lost. At 1518:14, a target was observed at 41 degrees, 50 minutes, 32 seconds, north latitude, 70 degrees, 46 minutes, west longitude, at an altitude of 500 feet. There were no further contacts.

According to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), there was no record that the pilot had obtained a weather briefing from a flight service station prior to the flight.

The weather reported at OWD, at 1453, and 1535, was as follows:

1453: Winds 070 at 8 knots; Visibility 7 miles; Few clouds at 3,200 feet; Temperature 66 degrees F; Dew point 61 degrees F.

1535: Winds 050 at 7 knots; Visibility 10 miles; Ceiling 2,800 feet overcast; Temperature 64 degrees F; Dew point 59 degrees F.

The weather reported at the Plymouth Airport, which was located about 5 miles northeast of the what was believed to be the airplane's last known position, was as follows:

1452: Winds 070 at 11 knots; Visibility 10 miles; Broken cloud layers at 500, 1,800 and 2,500 feet; Temperature 55 degrees F; Dew point 52 degrees F.

1552: Winds 060 at 5 knots; Visibility 10 miles; Ceiling 500 overcast, Temperature 55 degrees F; Dew point 52 degrees F.

The pilot was instrument rated and reported 2,900 hours of total flight experience on his last

application for an FAA third class medical certificate, which was issued on May 29, 1998.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	69, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Unknown
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 3 Valid Medical--w/ waivers/lim	Last FAA Medical Exam:	May 29, 1998
Occupational Pilot:	No	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	2900 hours (Total, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Piper	Registration:	N8235Z
Model/Series:	PA28RT-201T PA28RT-201	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	28R-8031130
Landing Gear Type:	Retractable - Tricycle	Seats:	4
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	Unknown	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	2750 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:		Engine Manufacturer:	Continental
ELT:	Installed, not activated	Engine Model/Series:	TSIO-360
Registered Owner:	GERHARD B. FINKENBEINER	Rated Power:	225 Horsepower
Operator:		Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Instrument (IMC)	Condition of Light:	Not reported
Observation Facility, Elevation:	OWD,50 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	30 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	14:53 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	130°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Scattered / 3200 ft AGL	Visibility	7 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	8 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	70°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	19°C / 16°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	NORWOOD, MA (OWD)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:		Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	14:45 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Fatal	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Passenger Injuries:		Aircraft Fire:	
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	
Total Injuries:	1 Fatal	Latitude, Longitude:	42.230239,-71.529151(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Schiada, Luke
Additional Participating Persons:	BILL STEVENS; FAA FSDO-1; Boston, MA
Original Publish Date:	March 30, 2004
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=46962

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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](#).