



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	NEW ORLEANS, Louisiana	Accident Number:	FTW00FA035
Date & Time:	November 20, 1999, 17:18 Local	Registration:	N8825P
Aircraft:	Piper PA-24-260	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Defining Event:		Injuries:	4 Fatal
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The airplane was number two in line behind traffic on a right base for runway 36R. The local controller asked the pilot if the visibility was hazy. The pilot replied, 'no it's not hazy uh it's just uh twilight (unintelligible) time.' When it appeared that the accident aircraft was lining up with runway 27, the local controller asked the pilot what his intentions were. The pilot advised local control that he would be turning downwind for runway 36R, but the local controller instructed him to turn right and enter a right base for runway 36R. The local controller asked the pilot if he had the runway in sight. The pilot replied 'roger.' A witness observed the aircraft flying slow at about 200 feet agl, with the wings level. The aircraft began a bank to the left and then a bank to the right. Then the aircraft's nose dropped, and it entered a left turn and descended from view. The airplane impacted the ground in a nose down attitude, and a fire erupted, which consumed the cockpit/cabin area. No structural or mechanical anomalies were observed during the post accident examination of the airplane.

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 aircraft control which resulted in a stall/spin. A contributing factor was the dusk light condition.

Findings

Occurrence #1: LOSS OF CONTROL - IN FLIGHT
Phase of Operation: APPROACH - VFR PATTERN - BASE LEG /BASE TO FINAL

Findings

1. (C) AIRCRAFT CONTROL - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND
2. (C) STALL/SPIN - INADVERTENT - PILOT IN COMMAND
3. (F) LIGHT CONDITION - DUSK

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

Findings

4. TERRAIN CONDITION - GROUND

Factual Information

HISTORY OF FLIGHT

On November 20, 1999, at 1718 central standard time, a Piper PA-24-260 airplane, N8825P, was destroyed upon terrain impact during an approach to the Lakefront Airport near New Orleans, Louisiana. The airplane was owned and operated by the pilot. The private pilot and three passengers were fatally injured. Dusk visual meteorological conditions prevailed, and a flight plan was not filed for the 14 Code of Federal Regulations Part 91 personal flight. The cross-country flight originated from the Peter Prince Field Airport near Milton, Florida, approximately 1610, and was destined for the Lakefront Airport.

At 1712, the pilot contacted the Lakefront Air Traffic Control Tower (local control), and reported seven miles east, inbound to land. The local controller instructed the pilot to report a right base for runway 36R. The pilot acknowledged the instructions.

At 1715, the local controller advised the pilot that he was number two following a Cessna on a right base for runway 36R. The pilot replied that he was "just out here waiting for final." The local controller asked the pilot if he had the traffic in sight that he was to follow on a right base. The pilot advised that he didn't have the traffic in sight but was still looking.

At 1716, the local controller asked the pilot if the visibility was hazy. The pilot replied, "no it's not hazy uh it's just uh twilight (unintelligible) time." The pilot was cleared to land on runway 36R and was issued a traffic advisory for traffic on final for runway 36L. The local controller asked the pilot to say his intentions and advised him it appeared he was heading toward runway 27.

At 1717, the pilot advised local control that he would be turning downwind for runway 36R. The local controller instructed the pilot to turn right and enter a right base for runway 36R, and again cleared him to land on runway 36R. The pilot was asked to say his altitude. The pilot advised that he was at 300 feet. The local controller then asked the pilot if he had the runway in sight. The pilot replied "roger."

A witness observed the aircraft flying slow at about 200 feet agl, with the wings level. The aircraft began a bank to the left and then a bank to the right. Then the aircraft's nose dropped, and it entered a left turn and descended out of view.

PERSONNEL INFORMATION

According to FAA records, the pilot was issued a private pilot certificate on March 6, 1984, with an airplane single-engine land rating. The pilot's flight logbook was not located, therefore, the

date of his last biennial flight review, and time in make and model of the accident airplane could not be determined. FAA records indicate the pilot reported having accrued 1,600 total flight hours on his application for a class three medical certificate, dated June 15, 1999. The medical certificate stipulated a limitation to wear corrective lenses when operating an aircraft. During the investigation, it could not be determined if the pilot was wearing corrective lenses at the time of the accident.

AIRCRAFT INFORMATION

The 1965-model Piper PA-24-260, was a low wing, single-engine, four-place airplane, which had retractable tricycle landing gear. It was powered by a Lycoming IO-540-D4A5 engine rated at 260-horsepower, and a Hartzell, two-bladed, constant speed-controllable pitch propeller. An estimate of the weight of the airplane at the time of the accident placed it within weight and balance limits.

The maintenance records were in the airplane at the time of the accident and were destroyed by fire; however, a few burnt pages which were legible, were recovered. The aircraft underwent its last annual inspection on April 15, 1999, at a tachometer time of 1,788 hours and a total aircraft time of 6,154 hours. Tachometer time at the time of the accident was 1,887.1 hours.

METEOROLOGICAL INFORMATION

At 1729, the Lakefront Airport weather observation was wind from 330 degrees at 6 knots, visibility 9 statute miles, few clouds at 3,400 feet, scattered clouds at 4,500 feet, ceiling overcast at 9,000 feet, temperature 70 degrees Fahrenheit, dew point temperature 64 degrees Fahrenheit, and altimeter 29.97 inches of mercury.

According to astronomical data, sunset was at 1702, and the end of civil twilight was at 1728.

AERODROME INFORMATION

The Lakefront Airport (NEW) is located on the south shore of Lake Pontchartrain, at an elevation of 9 feet. The airport has three runways, 09/27, 18L/36R, and 18R/36L. There is a rotating beacon on top of the terminal building located south of runway 09/27, and all three runways have medium intensity runway edge lights, which operate dusk to dawn. The beacon and runway edge lights were on at the time of the accident.

WRECKAGE AND IMPACT INFORMATION

The airplane impacted the ground within an industrial park between two warehouse buildings about 4,400 feet south of the approach end of runway 36R at latitude 30 degrees 01.690 minutes north and longitude 090 degrees 01.701 minutes west. Examination of the accident site revealed that the airplane impacted the ground on a measured magnetic heading of 054 degrees. The airplane came to rest upright 25 feet from the initial ground scar on a measured

magnetic heading of 306 degrees. The airplane's cockpit/cabin area was consumed by fire. Both the left and right wing leading edges were crushed aft, and the left wing from the auxiliary fuel tank inboard was destroyed by the fire. The empennage was separated and adjacent to the fuselage, but was facing 344 degrees. Flight control continuity was confirmed from all flight control surfaces through the fuselage to under the instrument panel. The landing gear was found in the down position. The flap actuator was found to be in a position consistent with a 30 degree extension of flaps.

The engine remained attached to the airframe. The engine sustained impact damage, and the aft portion of the engine sustained heat and fire damage. The crankshaft was rotated by turning the vacuum pump drive. There was continuity to the accessory gears and valve action on all cylinders. There was thumb compression on all cylinders except #2; however, the #2 rocker box cover was crushed. Both magnetos were destroyed by the fire.

The propeller was separated from the crankshaft with the crankshaft propeller flange still attached to the propeller hub. One blade was loose in the hub, and it was twisted and curled with chordwise scratching. The other blade had a slight twist, leading edge damage, and chordwise scratching. The propeller was found at the initial ground scar.

MEDICAL AND PATHOLOGICAL INFORMATION

The Parish of Orleans Coroner's Office in New Orleans, Louisiana, conducted an autopsy of the pilot. Toxicological testing was performed by the FAA Civil Aeromedical Institute's (CAMI) Forensic Toxicology and Accident Research Center at Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. The toxicological tests were negative for alcohol and drugs.

TESTS AND RESEARCH

A radar study was completed by the National Transportation Safety Board's Vehicle Performance Division. Based on the available radar data, N8825P descended to 600 feet at about 17:15:50. At about 17:16:17, N8825P turned right heading north, and ascended to 700 feet. At about 17:16:45, N8825P turned left heading west, and descended to 500 feet. At about 17:17:13, N8825P turned right heading north again, and descended to 300 feet while turning left heading west again. At about 17:17:59, N8825P descended until it dropped from radar coverage at an altitude of 200 feet. The aircraft continued to descend until ground impact, approximately 0.2 miles west-southwest of the last recorded radar target position.

ADDITIONAL DATA

The airplane was released to the owner's representative; however, the representative did not return a signed wreckage release.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	57, 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 3 Valid Medical-w/ waivers/lim	Last FAA Medical Exam:	June 15, 1999
Occupational Pilot:	No	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	1600 hours (Total, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Piper	Registration:	N8825P
Model/Series:	PA-24-260 PA-24-260	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	24-4281
Landing Gear Type:	Retractable - Tricycle	Seats:	4
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	April 15, 1999 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	2900 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	99 Hrs	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	6253 Hrs	Engine Manufacturer:	Lycoming
ELT:	Installed	Engine Model/Series:	IO-540-D4A5
Registered Owner:	CHARLES M. DANIELS	Rated Power:	260 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:	NEW ,9 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	1 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	17:29 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	360°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Scattered / 4500 ft AGL	Visibility	9 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	Overcast / 9000 ft AGL	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	6 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	330°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	29 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	21°C / 18°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	MILTON , FL (2R4)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	(NEW)	Type of Clearance:	VFR
Departure Time:	16:10 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class D

Airport Information

Airport:	LAKEFRONT NEW	Runway Surface Type:	Asphalt
Airport Elevation:	9 ft msl	Runway Surface Condition:	
Runway Used:	36R	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:	3699 ft / 75 ft	VFR Approach/Landing:	

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Fatal	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Passenger Injuries:	3 Fatal	Aircraft Fire:	On-ground
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	4 Fatal	Latitude, Longitude:	30.020038,-90.019798(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Wigington, Douglas
Additional Participating Persons:	JAMES M BOWLING; BATON ROUGE , LA GERALD R JAMES; WILLIAMSPORT , PA PAUL LEHMAN JR.; VERO BEACH , FL
Original Publish Date:	July 2, 2001
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=47816

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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](#).