



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	DELTA JUNCTION, Alaska	Accident Number:	ANC00LA047
Date & Time:	April 16, 2000, 11:00 Local	Registration:	N3697M
Aircraft:	Piper PA-12	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	2 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The certificated private pilot reported that while on approach to land on a large, featureless, and snow-covered glacier, he momentarily lost visual reference due to flat light conditions. He said that he was unable to judge his descent rate, and the airplane's right ski struck the surface of the glacier. The right main landing gear collapsed, and the right wing struck the surface of the glacier. The pilot said that there were no preaccident mechanical anomalies with 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 altitude/clearance. Factors associated with the accident were flat light conditions, and snow-covered terrain.

Findings

Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER

Phase of Operation: APPROACH

Findings

1. (C) ALTITUDE/CLEARANCE - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND
2. (F) LIGHT CONDITION - OTHER
3. (F) TERRAIN CONDITION - SNOW COVERED

Occurrence #2: GEAR COLLAPSED
Phase of Operation: LANDING

Factual Information

On April 16, 2000, about 1100 Alaska daylight time, a ski equipped Piper PA-12 airplane, N3697M, sustained substantial damage while landing at an off airport site, about 23 miles southwest of Delta Junction, Alaska, at 63 degrees 24 minutes north latitude, 146 degrees 21 minutes west longitude. The certificated private pilot, and the one passenger aboard, were not injured. The airplane was being operated as a visual flight rules (VFR) personal flight under Title 14, CFR Part 91, when the accident occurred. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed, and no flight plan was filed. The flight originated about 1000, from the Fairbanks International Airport, Fairbanks, Alaska.

During a telephone conversation with the National Transportation Safety Board investigator-in-charge on April 19, the pilot reported that during approach to land on a large, featureless, and snow-covered glacier, he momentarily lost visual reference due to flat light conditions. He said that he was unable to judge his descent rate, and the airplane's right ski struck the surface of the glacier. The right main landing gear collapsed, and the right wing struck the surface of the glacier. The airplane sustained substantial damage to the right wing, and fuselage.

The pilot said that there were no preaccident mechanical anomalies with the airplane.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	50, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land	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 3 Valid Medical-w/ waivers/lim	Last FAA Medical Exam:	July 14, 1998
Occupational Pilot:	UNK	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	2100 hours (Total, all aircraft), 1900 hours (Total, this make and model), 8 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 5 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 1 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Piper	Registration:	N3697M
Model/Series:	PA-12 PA-12	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	2641
Landing Gear Type:	Ski	Seats:	2
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	August 24, 1999 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	1750 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	16 Hrs	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	5380 Hrs	Engine Manufacturer:	Lycoming
ELT:	Installed, not activated	Engine Model/Series:	O-320-A2B
Registered Owner:	RICHARD W. FLANDERS	Rated Power:	150 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:		Distance from Accident Site:	
Observation Time:		Direction from Accident Site:	
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Visibility	50 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	10 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	180°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:		Temperature/Dew Point:	
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	FAIRBANKS , AK (FAI)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	DELTA JUNCTION , AK (11AK)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	10:00 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Airport Information

Airport:		Runway Surface Type:	
Airport Elevation:		Runway Surface Condition:	
Runway Used:	0	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:		VFR Approach/Landing:	Full stop

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	2 None	Latitude, Longitude:	63.699268,-144.890304(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Johnson, Clinton
Additional Participating Persons:	THOMAS F LANE (FAA); FAIRBANKS , AK
Original Publish Date:	May 30, 2001
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	The NTSB traveled to the scene of this accident.
Investigation Docket:	https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=49006

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