



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Wewahitchka, Florida	Accident Number:	MIA01LA032
Date & Time:	November 21, 2000, 09:30 Local	Registration:	N9658C
Aircraft:	Piper PA-32RT-300	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	3 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The pilot smelled something, and when he checked the instruments he noticed that the oil pressure had decreased. He elected to make a force landing in rough terrain. At touchdown the landing gear tore off causing damage to the wings. Examination of the engine revealed that the number 5 cylinder connecting rod had separated at the rod cap.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: a loss of engine power due to the number 5 cylinder connecting rod separating at the rod cap, resulting in a forced landing and subsequent impact with rough uneven terrain.

Findings

Occurrence #1: LOSS OF ENGINE POWER
Phase of Operation: CRUISE

Findings
1. (C) ENGINE ASSEMBLY,CONNECTING ROD - SEPARATION

Occurrence #2: FORCED LANDING
Phase of Operation: EMERGENCY DESCENT/LANDING

Occurrence #3: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER
Phase of Operation: EMERGENCY DESCENT/LANDING

Findings

2. TERRAIN CONDITION - ROUGH/UNEVEN

Factual Information

On November 21, 2000, about 0930 central standard time, a Piper PA-32RT-300, N9658C, owned by Grady and Francis Inc., lost engine power and was forced to land in rough terrain near Wewahitchka, Florida. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed at the time, and an IFR flight plan was filed for the 14 CFR Part 91 personal flight. The airplane was substantially damaged. The airline transport-rated pilot and two passengers reported no injuries. The flight departed from Orlando Executive Airport, Florida, at an unknown time, en route to Panama City, Florida.

According to the pilot he smelled something, and when he checked the instruments he noticed that the oil pressure had decreased. He felt that he could not make an on airport landing so he decided to land in rough terrain. At touchdown, the landing gear tore off, causing damage to the wings.

Examination of the engine revealed no visible oil on top of the engine, but oil was observed at the lower portion of the firewall.

The engine was torndown and examined at Atlanta Air Salvage, Griffin, George, under the supervision of Phil Power, Senior Air Safety Investigator, Atlanta, Georgia, on February 1, 2001. The examination revealed that the number 5 cylinder connecting rod had separated at the rod cap. The crankcase had a 3 inches by 1 ½ inch hole in the bottom of the case between the crankshaft and the oil sump at the number 5 location of the crankshaft. Pieces of the number 5 connecting rod cap, rod cap bolts, and nuts were recovered fragmented.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Airline transport; Flight instructor	Age:	72, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land; Multi-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	Airplane multi-engine; Airplane single-engine; Instrument airplane	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 2 Valid Medical--no waivers/lim.	Last FAA Medical Exam:	May 31, 2000
Occupational Pilot:	UNK	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	June 22, 2000
Flight Time:	10500 hours (Total, all aircraft), 400 hours (Total, this make and model), 10000 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 125 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 75 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 8 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Piper	Registration:	N9658C
Model/Series:	PA-32RT-300	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	32R-785064
Landing Gear Type:	Retractable - Tricycle	Seats:	6
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	3600 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:		Engine Manufacturer:	Lycoming
ELT:	Installed, not activated	Engine Model/Series:	IO-540-K1G5D
Registered Owner:	GRADY AND FRANCIS INC.	Rated Power:	300 Horsepower
Operator:		Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	PFN,21 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	30 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	10:30 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	270°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Scattered	Visibility	7 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	11 knots / 20 knots	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	330°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30.5 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	8°C / 7°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	ORLANDO, FL (ORL)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	IFR
Destination:	PANAMA CITY, FL (PFN)	Type of Clearance:	IFR
Departure Time:		Type of Airspace:	Unknown

Airport Information

Airport:	Panama City-Bay County PFN	Runway Surface Type:	
Airport Elevation:	21 ft msl	Runway Surface Condition:	Unknown
Runway Used:		IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:		VFR Approach/Landing:	Forced landing

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	2 None	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	3 None	Latitude, Longitude:	30.166666,-85.233329

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Yurman, Alan
Additional Participating Persons:	Skip Wayman; FAA; Birmingham, AL
Original Publish Date:	January 2, 2002
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=51247

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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](#).