



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Houston, Texas	Accident Number:	FTW01LA077
Date & Time:	March 13, 2001, 11:45 Local	Registration:	N93504
Aircraft:	Ercoupe 415-C	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	1 Serious
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The pilot was executing touch-and-go landings when he misjudged the turn from the downwind leg to the base leg, which resulted in a premature descent. The pilot stated that he should have executed a go-around; however, he elected to continue toward the runway. Subsequently, the airplane's altitude on the final approach leg was low and the left wing contacted trees. The airplane then entered an uncontrolled descent and impacted the ground.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: the pilot's failure to execute a go-around after becoming low on a visual approach.

Findings

Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER
Phase of Operation: APPROACH - VFR PATTERN - FINAL APPROACH

Findings

1. (C) ALTITUDE - LOW - PILOT IN COMMAND
2. (C) GO-AROUND - NOT PERFORMED - PILOT IN COMMAND
3. OBJECT - TREE(S)
4. TERRAIN CONDITION - GROUND

Factual Information

On March 13, 2001, at 1145 central standard time, an Ercoupe 415-C airplane, N93504, was substantially damaged when it impacted trees and terrain during final approach to the Clover Field Airport, Houston, Texas. The private pilot, who was the registered owner and operator of the airplane, sustained serious injuries. 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 Clover Field Airport at 1130.

According to the pilot, he was executing touch-and-go landings to runway 14R. He reported that he misjudged the turn from the downwind leg to the base leg, which resulted in a premature descent. He stated that he should have executed a go-around; however, he elected to continue toward the runway. Subsequently, the airplane's altitude on the final approach leg was low and the left wing contacted trees. The airplane then entered a descent and impacted the ground.

Witnesses verified that the airplane was executing touch-and-go landings to runway 14R. One witness reported that he observed the airplane on final approach and it "looked different" than it had on previous approaches. They observed the airplane "bank steeply to the left" and, subsequently, impact the ground.

According to FAA inspectors, who examined the airplane at the accident site, both wings were bent aft. The right wing's skin separated from the leading edge aft, which exposed the main wing spar. They added that the fuselage, empennage, and tail structure sustained structural damage.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	71, 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:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 3 Valid Medical--w/ waivers/lim	Last FAA Medical Exam:	August 30, 1999
Occupational Pilot:	No	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	January 24, 2001
Flight Time:	450 hours (Total, all aircraft), 250 hours (Total, this make and model), 430 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Ercoupe	Registration:	N93504
Model/Series:	415-C	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	815
Landing Gear Type:	Tricycle	Seats:	2
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	December 11, 2000 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	1400 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:		Engine Manufacturer:	Continental
ELT:	Installed, activated, did not aid in locating accident	Engine Model/Series:	C-85-12F
Registered Owner:	Jerry W. Jourdan	Rated Power:	85 Horsepower
Operator:		Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None
Operator Does Business As:	N/A	Operator Designator Code:	

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	LVJ,43 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	
Observation Time:	11:53 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	8 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	60°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30.04 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	22°C / 9°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Houston, TX (LVJ)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	(LVJ)	Type of Clearance:	Traffic advisory
Departure Time:	11:30 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class E

Airport Information

Airport:	Clover Field LVJ	Runway Surface Type:	Asphalt
Airport Elevation:	43 ft msl	Runway Surface Condition:	Dry
Runway Used:	14R	IFR Approach:	Unknown
Runway Length/Width:	4302 ft / 70 ft	VFR Approach/Landing:	Touch and go;Traffic pattern

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Serious	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:		Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 Serious	Latitude, Longitude:	29.609762,-95.11943(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Ragogna, Jason
Additional Participating Persons:	James D Moore; Federal Aviation Administration; Houston, TX
Original Publish Date:	July 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=51903

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