



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	ATHENS, Georgia	Accident Number:	MIA02LA013
Date & Time:	October 28, 2001, 18:27 Local	Registration:	N24697
Aircraft:	Beech C23	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	2 Serious
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The pilot landed the airplane, taxied to the fixed base operator, and shut down the engine. About 40 minutes later he re-started the engine, and started to taxi to runway 27. This was his first time at this airport, he landed during daylight and taxied for takeoff during darkness. The pilot was cleared to the hold short of runway 27, prior to getting clearance for takeoff. After getting clearance for takeoff, the PIC turned to the right placing him on a parallel taxiway that leads to runway 27, and immediately went to full power, unaware that he was on the taxiway and not on runway 27. The tower made several attempts to stop the pilot before the airplane crossed the approach end of runway 27. After departing the hard surface the airplane went into a grassy area, down a 40 foot drop off, coming to rest inverted. The pilot admitted to have erred in judgment causing this accident. The pilot received his private pilot rating April 2001. He had a total of 117 hours in all aircraft, of which 8 hours were of night operations.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: the pilot misjudged the ailment of the airplane on the active runway, inadvertently taking off from a parallel taxiway, and subsequently departing the hard surface into a 40 foot drop off. A factor in this accident was a dark night, and the pilot's total experience in night operations.

Findings

Occurrence #1: ON GROUND/WATER ENCOUNTER WITH TERRAIN/WATER

Phase of Operation: TAKEOFF - ROLL/RUN

Findings

1. (F) LIGHT CONDITION - DARK NIGHT
2. (C) PROPER ALIGNMENT - MISJUDGED - PILOT IN COMMAND
3. VISUAL/AURAL PERCEPTION - PILOT IN COMMAND
4. (F) LACK OF TOTAL EXPERIENCE IN TYPE OPERATION - PILOT IN COMMAND
5. TERRAIN CONDITION - DROP-OFF/DESCENDING EMBANKMENT

Factual Information

On October 28, 2001 about 1827 eastern standard time, a Beech C23, N24697, registered to a private individual, started to takeoff from a taxiway and lost control in the grass at the Athens Airport, Athens, Georgia. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed at the time and no flight plan was filed for the 14 CFR Part 91 personal flight. The airplane was substantially damaged. The private pilot and the passenger reported serious injuries. The flight was originating at the time, and was en route to Dawson, Georgia.

According to the pilot, after landing, he taxied to the fixed-base operator, and he shut down the engine. This was his first time at this airport; he landed during daylight and taxied for takeoff during darkness, about 40 minutes later. After restarting the engine, he made radio contact with ground control, and was directed to taxi to runway 27. He said he missed the turn to taxiway B-3, was then directed to taxiway A-4 and held short of runway 27. After completing the run-up, and checklist, he contacted ground control. He said, ".....it was so dark I moved over so that the taxi lights were right on top of the yellow centerline. I looked ahead into total darkness for the runway." He said he had to look down to continue on the taxi centerline, then up to search for the runway, then down to taxi centerline. As he continued to search for the runway, air traffic control (ATC) shouted, "Stop.....Stop." He applied the brakes, went over the 40-foot drop off, impacting nose first, and nosed over coming to rest upside down.

According to the FAA inspector's memorandum, the pilot-in-command (PIC) was cleared to the hold short of runway 27, prior to getting clearance for takeoff. After getting clearance for takeoff, the PIC turned to the right placing him on a parallel taxiway that leads to runway 27. He ".....immediately went to full power," unaware that he was on the taxiway and not on runway 27. He needed to have gone another 25 to 30 yards before turning right onto runway 27. The tower made several attempts to "stop" the PIC before the airplane crossed the approach end of runway 27. After departing the hard surface the airplane went into a grassy area, down a 40 foot drop off coming to rest inverted. The PIC told the FAA inspector it was his first time at this airport alone and he "admitted to have erred in judgment causing this accident."

The pilot received his private pilot rating April 2001. He had a total of 117 hours in all aircraft, and 72.6 hours in this make and model airplane, and 8 hours of night operations.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	58, 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:	October 4, 2001
Occupational Pilot:	UNK	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	April 29, 2000
Flight Time:	117 hours (Total, all aircraft), 73 hours (Total, this make and model), 46 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 10 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 2 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Beech	Registration:	N24697
Model/Series:	C23	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	M-1424
Landing Gear Type:	Tricycle	Seats:	4
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	July 1, 2001 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	2450 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	13 Hrs	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	2980 Hrs at time of accident	Engine Manufacturer:	Lycoming
ELT:	Installed, not activated	Engine Model/Series:	O-360-144G
Registered Owner:	James E. Dampier	Rated Power:	180 Horsepower
Operator:		Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Night/dark
Observation Facility, Elevation:	KAHN,808 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	
Observation Time:	17:53 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	4 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	80°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30.46 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	10°C / 5°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	ATHENS, GA (AHN)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	Dawson, GA (16J)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	18:27 Local	Type of Airspace:	

Airport Information

Airport:	Athens Ben Epps AHN	Runway Surface Type:	Asphalt
Airport Elevation:	808 ft msl	Runway Surface Condition:	Dry
Runway Used:	27	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:	5522 ft / 100 ft	VFR Approach/Landing:	None

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Serious	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	1 Serious	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	2 Serious	Latitude, Longitude:	33.948333,-83.32611

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC): Yurman, AI
Additional Participating Persons: Clovis Jackson; FAA; Atlanta, GA

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Last Revision Date:

Investigation Class: [Class](#)

Note:

Investigation Docket: <https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=53685>

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