



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Conroe, Texas	Accident Number:	FTW03LA068
Date & Time:	December 28, 2002, 13:30 Local	Registration:	N3885J
Aircraft:	Barber Glasair	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Defining Event:		Injuries:	2 Fatal
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

Witnesses near the accident site reported that the airplane collided with a light pole in a residential backyard after the airplane "spun nose down into the ground." The FAA inspector, who responded to the accident site, reported that the amateur-built airplane, which was mostly built out of fiberglass and composite materials, "was totally consumed by the post-impact fire." The inspector added that all of the major aircraft components were located within a 20-foot radius from the initial point of impact. At the time of his last medical examination on April 20, 2001, the pilot had accumulated a total of 1,230 hours. No discrepancies were found with the airframe or the engine that could have prevented normal flight operations.

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 airspeed resulting in an inadvertent stall and a subsequent loss of control.

Findings

Occurrence #1: LOSS OF CONTROL - IN FLIGHT
Phase of Operation: MANEUVERING

Findings

1. (C) AIRSPEED - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND
2. STALL/SPIN - INADVERTENT - PILOT IN COMMAND

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

Findings

3. TERRAIN CONDITION - GROUND

Factual Information

On December 28, 2002, at 1330 central standard time, a Barber Glasair homebuilt aircraft, N3885J, was destroyed upon collision with terrain following a loss of control near Conroe, Texas. The non-instrument rated private pilot and his passenger were fatally injured. The airplane, which was built in 1986 by Hugh Barber, had been owned and operated by the pilot since June 23, 1993. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed for the Title 14 Code of Federal Regulations Part 91 flight. No flight plan was filed for the local flight, which was reported to have originated from the Montgomery County Airport (CXO), near Conroe, Texas, at 1310.

The purpose of the flight nor the intentions of the occupants could not be determined during the investigation. Local authorities were notified of the accident by a local resident via a 911 call. The accident site was located near State Highway 105, approximately 9.7 miles east of Conroe. Witnesses near the accident site reported that the airplane collided with a light pole in a residential backyard after the airplane "spun nose down into the ground." A post-impact fire destroyed the airplane. The fire was extinguished by the local fire department before it had a chance to spread into a mobile home and adjacent residences. There were no reported injuries to anyone in the mobile home or on the ground.

The FAA inspector, who responded to the accident site, reported that the amateur-built airplane, which was mostly built out of fiberglass and composite materials, "was totally consumed by the post-impact fire." The inspector reported that the airplane "snapped some powerlines and knocked a light pole before coming to rest in a backyard." The inspector added that all of the major aircraft components were located within a 20-foot radius from the initial point of impact. The aircraft was powered by a 150-horsepower Lycoming O-320-E2A engine, serial number L-23305-27A.

According to data provided by the FAA, the pilot was issued his private pilot certificate on July 25, 1985. According to the data provided by the pilot at the time of his last medical examination on April 20, 2001, the pilot had accumulated a total of 1,230 hours as of that date. The pilot was issued a third class medical certificate with a restriction which required him to wear corrective lenses while operating an aircraft.

The nearest weather reporting station to the accident site was the Montgomery County Airport (CXO), located approximately 12 miles west of the accident site. At 1453 the reported winds were from 180 degrees at 7 knots, clear skies with a visibility of 10 statute miles. The temperature was 19 degrees Celsius, and the dewpoint was 2 degrees, with an altimeter setting of 30.29 inches of Mercury. Based on a field elevation of 436 feet, the investigator-in-charge calculated the density altitude at 436 feet at the time of the accident.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	60, 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:	April 20, 2001
Occupational Pilot:	No	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	March 10, 2001
Flight Time:	1230 hours (Total, all aircraft), 500 hours (Total, this make and model)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Barber	Registration:	N3885J
Model/Series:	Glasair	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	Yes
Airworthiness Certificate:	Experimental (Special)	Serial Number:	200
Landing Gear Type:	Tricycle	Seats:	2
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	Condition	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	1750 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:		Engine Manufacturer:	Lycoming
ELT:	Installed, not activated	Engine Model/Series:	O-320-E2A
Registered Owner:	Louis R. Tolbert	Rated Power:	150 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:	KCXO, 245 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	12 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	14:53 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	270°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	7 knots / None	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	180°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30.29 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	19°C / 2°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Conroe, TX (CXO)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:		Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	13:10 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Fatal	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Passenger Injuries:	1 Fatal	Aircraft Fire:	On-ground
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	2 Fatal	Latitude, Longitude:	30.316667,-95.33361

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC): Casanova, Hector

Additional Participating Persons: Howard Davenport; Federal Aviation Administration; Houston, TX

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Last Revision Date:

Investigation Class: [Class](#)

Note:

Investigation Docket: <https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=56251>

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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](#).