



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Utopia, Texas	Accident Number:	DFW07LA199
Date & Time:	September 15, 2007, 08:10 Local	Registration:	N110SP
Aircraft:	Monocoupe 110SP	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Defining Event:		Injuries:	1 Fatal
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The high-wing single engine airplane was destroyed following a collision with terrain while performing aerobatic flight maneuvers. The airline transport-rated pilot, sole occupant of the airplane, was fatally injured. The airplane was buzzing a friend of the pilot's house. On the last pass while flying inverted the airplane's engine was observed to cough shortly before the airplane impacted the ground. The witness noted that the airplane suddenly entered a vertical, inverted dive into a bunch of oak trees. A review of the aircraft records indicated no pre-impact anomalies and that the aircraft was properly maintained.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The pilot's loss of control while performing a low level inverted flight maneuver.

Findings

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

Findings

1. (C) IN-FLIGHT PLANNING/DECISION - IMPROPER - PILOT IN COMMAND
2. (C) AEROBATICS - INTENTIONAL - PILOT IN COMMAND
3. LOW ALTITUDE FLIGHT/MANEUVER - PERFORMED - PILOT IN COMMAND

Occurrence #2: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER
Phase of Operation: MANEUVERING

Factual Information

On September 15, 2007, at 0810 central daylight time, a 1931 vintage Monocoupe 110SP airplane, N110SP, was destroyed following a collision with terrain while performing aerobatic flight maneuvers near Utopia, Texas. The airline transport rated pilot, sole occupant of the airplane, was fatally injured. The airplane was owned and operated by the pilot. No flight plan was filed and visual meteorological conditions prevailed for the personal flight conducted under 14 Code of Federal Regulations Part 91. The local flight initiated from the pilot's private airstrip, near Utopia, Texas, at an undetermined time.

In a written statement from an eyewitness and personal friend of the pilot, who is also a pilot, stated that "his friend was buzzing his house." He added that the first pass was from north to south, just west of his house. The second pass was to the north at about 200-feet above the ground. The airplane was then observed climbing to about 3,000-feet above ground level, performed a loop and entered a vertical nose-dive. The airplane was then observed passing below the tree line, and just before he came back in to view, the witness reported hearing a "cough" from the engine. The witness further stated that the engine sounded smoothly as he observed the airplane emerging from behind the trees. The witness noted that the airplane was flying inverted, something that his friend had "never done in previous passes." The airplane then "suddenly entered a vertical, inverted dive into a bunch of oak trees."

A Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) inspector performed an on-scene examination of the wreckage. According to the inspector the airplane was totally destroyed due to the apparent high speed vertical impact with the ground. The wreckage of the vintage airplane was recovered to the owner's private hangar on Thunder Ranch. A review of the aircraft records indicated no pre-impact anomalies and that the aircraft was well maintained.

An autopsy was performed by the Bexar County Medical Examiner's Office, San Antonio, Texas. The autopsy revealed the cause of death as "blunt force injuries."

Toxicological testing was performed by the FAA's Civil Aerospace Medical Institute, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma (CAMI). A toxicology report was completed by CAMI, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma and indicated no drugs were found in the system. Tests for carbon monoxide, cyanide, and ethanol were not performed. No drugs were detected in the tests.

At 0751, the weather at the Hondo Municipal Airport, located approximately 23 miles to the southeast of the accident site, was wind from 020 degrees at 5 knots, visibility 7 miles, clear skies, temperature 21 degrees Celsius, dew point 19 degrees Celsius, and a barometric pressure setting of 30.18 inches of Mercury.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Airline transport; Flight engineer	Age:	63, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land; Multi-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Front
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	Yes
Medical Certification:	Class 3 With waivers/limitations	Last FAA Medical Exam:	January 9, 2007
Occupational Pilot:	No	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	February 23, 2007
Flight Time:	15473 hours (Total, all aircraft), 50 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 1 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Monocoupe	Registration:	N110SP
Model/Series:	110SP	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	6W13
Landing Gear Type:	Tailwheel	Seats:	2
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	October 3, 2006 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	1029 Hrs as of last inspection	Engine Manufacturer:	Warner
ELT:	Installed, activated	Engine Model/Series:	Scarab Series
Registered Owner:	On file	Rated Power:	125 Horsepower
Operator:	On file	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	KHDO,930 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	23 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	07:51 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	150°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Visibility	7 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	5 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	20°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30.18 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	21°C / 19°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Utopia, TX	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:		Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:		Type of Airspace:	

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Fatal	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Passenger Injuries:		Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 Fatal	Latitude, Longitude:	29.522777,-99.517776

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Gamble, William
Additional Participating Persons:	David G Wagner; Flight Standards District Office; San Antonio, TX
Original Publish Date:	December 28, 2008
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=66673

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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](#).