



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Quitman, Georgia	Accident Number:	ERA09CA442
Date & Time:	August 4, 2009, 10:00 Local	Registration:	N43377
Aircraft:	RANS S12	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:	Collision during takeoff/land	Injuries:	1 Minor, 1 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The pilot was making an approach to landing in day visual meteorological conditions. On the final leg of the traffic pattern, the pilot descended too low and impacted trees prior to the runway. The airplane sustained substantial damage to the fuselage and wings. Neither the pilot nor a Federal Aviation Administration inspector, who examined the airplane after the accident, reported any preexisting malfunctions or mechanical anomalies. The nearest weather reporting facility, located approximately 16 nautical miles east of the accident location, reported calm winds, 10 statute miles visibility, and few clouds at 1,100 feet at the time of the accident.

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 obstacle clearance on final approach.

Findings

Aircraft	Descent/approach/glide path - Not attained/maintained
Personnel issues	Aircraft control - Pilot

Factual Information

History of Flight

Approach-VFR pattern final	Collision during takeoff/land (Defining event)
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Pilot Information

Certificate:	Airline transport; Commercial	Age:	82,Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land; Multi-engine land; Multi-engine sea	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	Glider	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Sport pilot None	Last FAA Medical Exam:	
Occupational Pilot:	UNK	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	(Estimated) 17000 hours (Total, all aircraft), 100 hours (Total, this make and model)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	RANS	Registration:	N43377
Model/Series:	S12 XL	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Experimental light sport (Special)	Serial Number:	07040989
Landing Gear Type:	Tricycle	Seats:	2
Date/Type of Last Inspection:		Certified Max Gross Wt.:	1000 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	112 Hrs	Engine Manufacturer:	Rotax
ELT:	Installed, not activated	Engine Model/Series:	582
Registered Owner:	Howard Austin	Rated Power:	65 Horsepower
Operator:	Howard Austin	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	VLD,203 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	16 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	09:53 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	95°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Few / 1100 ft AGL	Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	/	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:		Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30.09 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	27°C / 23°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:			
Departure Point:	Quitman, GA (4J5)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	Quitman, GA (4J5)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	09:30 Local	Type of Airspace:	

Airport Information

Airport:	Quitman Brooks County 4J5	Runway Surface Type:	
Airport Elevation:	185 ft msl	Runway Surface Condition:	
Runway Used:		IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:		VFR Approach/Landing:	Unknown

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Minor	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 Minor, 1 None	Latitude, Longitude:	30.805,-83.586669(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Hicks, Ralph
Additional Participating Persons:	John Carroll; FAA/FSDO; Atlanta, GA
Original Publish Date:	November 9, 2009
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	This accident report documents the factual circumstances of this accident as described to the NTSB.
Investigation Docket:	https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=74452

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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](#).