



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	CLARKS HILL, South Carolina	Accident Number:	ATL88LA017
Date & Time:	October 18, 1987, 18:00 Local	Registration:	N98806
Aircraft:	PIPER J-3	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	1 Minor, 1 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

THE AIRCRAFT WAS CIRCLING ABOUT 200 FEET ABOVE THE TREES WHEN THE PILOT BEGAN A CLIMBING TURN. AS HE LEVELED THE WINGS THE AIRCRAFT BEGAN TO DESCEND. THE PILOT APPLIED FULL POWER AND EASED FORWARD ON THE CONTROL STICK LOWERING THE AIRCRAFT NOSE SLIGHTLY. WHEN HE PULLED BACK ON THE FLIGHT CONTROL THE AIRCRAFT CONTINUED TO DESCEND INTO THE TREES. THE PILOT REPORTED HE WAS ONLY ABLE TO MOVE THE CONTROL STICK THROUGH APRX 50% OF ITS TRAVEL WHEN HE ATTEMPTED TO LEVEL THE AIRCRAFT. HE FELT THAT THE BOTTOM REAR SEAT CUSHION MAY HAVE SLID FORWARD, AS IT HAD PREVIOUSLY, RESTRICTING THE CONTROL STICK TRAVEL.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be:

Findings

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

Findings

1. (C) FUSELAGE, SEAT - LOOSE
2. (C) FLT CONTROL SYST, YOKE/CONTROL STICK - BLOCKED(PARTIAL)

3. PROPER CLIMB RATE - NOT POSSIBLE - PILOT IN COMMAND
4. (C) OPERATION WITH KNOWN DEFICIENCIES IN EQUIPMENT - INTENTIONAL - PILOT IN COMMAND
5. (F) ALTITUDE - INADEQUATE - PILOT IN COMMAND

Occurrence #2: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH OBJECT
Phase of Operation: DESCENT - UNCONTROLLED

Findings

6. OBJECT - TREE(S)

Factual Information

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial	Age:	25, 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:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 1 Valid Medical--no waivers/lim.	Last FAA Medical Exam:	September 3, 1987
Occupational Pilot:	No	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	853 hours (Total, all aircraft), 60 hours (Total, this make and model), 152 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 194 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	PIPER	Registration:	N98806
Model/Series:	J-3 J-3	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Utility	Serial Number:	19048
Landing Gear Type:	Tailwheel	Seats:	2
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	1170 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	10 Hrs	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	11334 Hrs	Engine Manufacturer:	CONTINENTAL
ELT:	Installed	Engine Model/Series:	C-85-12
Registered Owner:	AUGUSTA AVIATION INC.	Rated Power:	85 Horsepower
Operator:	AUGUSTA AVIATION INC	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None
Operator Does Business As:		Operator Designator Code:	

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	SAV ,424 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	15 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	18:06 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	160°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Visibility	15 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	3 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	120°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	26°C / 14°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	AUGUSTA , GA (DNL)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:		Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	17:00 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Airport Information

Airport:		Runway Surface Type:	
Airport Elevation:		Runway Surface Condition:	
Runway Used:	0	IFR Approach:	
Runway Length/Width:		VFR Approach/Landing:	None

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:	33.629077,-82.140869(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC): Burnett, Karen

Additional Participating Persons: L P SHEARER; CAROLINA , SC

Original Publish Date: August 31, 1988

Last Revision Date:

Investigation Class: [Class](#)

Note:

Investigation Docket: <https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=7660>

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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](#).