



# Aviation Investigation Final Report

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<b>Location:</b>	GAINESVILLE, Georgia	<b>Accident Number:</b>	ATL89LA202
<b>Date &amp; Time:</b>	August 25, 1989, 17:07 Local	<b>Registration:</b>	N2487N
<b>Aircraft:</b>	PIPER PA-38-112	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Substantial
<b>Defining Event:</b>		<b>Injuries:</b>	1 None
<b>Flight Conducted Under:</b>	Part 91: General aviation - Instructional		

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## Analysis

THE AIRPLANE ENGINE EXPERIENCED A LOSS OF POWER DURING FINAL APPROACH, AND THE AIRPLANE SUBSEQUENTLY CRASHED INTO TREES SHORT OF THE RUNWAY. THE STUDENT PLT WAS ON A LOCAL, UNSUPERVISED SOLO FLT AND HAD CONDUCTED SEVERAL T&G LDGS PRIOR TO THE POWER LOSS. TOTAL FLT TIME THIS FLT WAS ABOUT 1 HOUR. THE OPERATOR REPORTED THAT POST-CRASH EXAMINATION OF THE AIRPLANE REVEALED NO FUEL REMAINING IN THE FUEL TANKS. THE OPERATOR NOTED THAT THE AIRPLANE HAD BEEN OPERATED A TOTAL OF 4.6 HRS SINCE LAST REFUELING. HE ALSO NOTED THAT THE PLT WHO HAD FLOWN THE AIRPLANE ON THE PREVIOUS FLT REPORTED THAT AT THE END OF THE FLT, THE LT & RT FUEL QTY GAUGES RESPECTIVELY INDICATED 5 GALLONS & LESS THAN 5 GALLONS REMAINING. THE STUDENT PLT REPORTED THAT HE HAD ESTIMATED THE TANKS WERE ABOUT 1/2 FULL WHEN HE PREFLIGHTED THE AIRPLANE PRIOR TO THIS FLIGHT.

## Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: THE PILOT'S MISJUDGEMENT OF THE AIRPLANE FUEL SUPPLY DURING PREFLIGHT INSPECTION, AND HIS SUBSEQUENT FAILURE TO MONITOR IN-FLIGHT FUEL CONSUMPTION, WHICH LED TO AN ENGINE POWER LOSS DUE TO FUEL EXHAUSTION. CONTRIBUTING TO THE ACCIDENT WERE THE PILOT'S DECISION NOT TO REFUEL THE AIRPLANE PRIOR TO THE FLIGHT, AND HIS LACK OF TOTAL FLIGHT EXPERIENCE.

## Findings

Occurrence #1: LOSS OF ENGINE POWER(TOTAL) - NONMECHANICAL  
Phase of Operation: APPROACH - VFR PATTERN - FINAL APPROACH

### Findings

1. (C) FLUID,FUEL - EXHAUSTION
  2. (C) AIRCRAFT PREFLIGHT - INADEQUATE - PILOT IN COMMAND
  3. (F) LACK OF TOTAL EXPERIENCE - PILOT IN COMMAND
  4. (C) FUEL SUPPLY - MISJUDGED - PILOT IN COMMAND
  5. (F) REFUELING - NOT OBTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND
  6. (C) IN-FLIGHT PLANNING/DECISION - INADEQUATE - PILOT IN COMMAND
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Occurrence #2: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH OBJECT  
Phase of Operation: DESCENT - EMERGENCY

### Findings

7. OBJECT - TREE(S)

## Factual Information

### Pilot Information

<b>Certificate:</b>	Student	<b>Age:</b>	45, Male
<b>Airplane Rating(s):</b>	None	<b>Seat Occupied:</b>	Unknown
<b>Other Aircraft Rating(s):</b>	None	<b>Restraint Used:</b>	
<b>Instrument Rating(s):</b>	None	<b>Second Pilot Present:</b>	No
<b>Instructor Rating(s):</b>		<b>Toxicology Performed:</b>	No
<b>Medical Certification:</b>	Class 3 Valid Medical--no waivers/lim.	<b>Last FAA Medical Exam:</b>	July 14, 1989
<b>Occupational Pilot:</b>	UNK	<b>Last Flight Review or Equivalent:</b>	
<b>Flight Time:</b>	20 hours (Total, all aircraft), 20 hours (Total, this make and model), 5 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 20 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 12 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 1 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

### Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

<b>Aircraft Make:</b>	PIPER	<b>Registration:</b>	N2487N
<b>Model/Series:</b>	PA-38-112 PA-38-112	<b>Aircraft Category:</b>	Airplane
<b>Year of Manufacture:</b>		<b>Amateur Built:</b>	
<b>Airworthiness Certificate:</b>		<b>Serial Number:</b>	38-79A0870
<b>Landing Gear Type:</b>	Tricycle	<b>Seats:</b>	2
<b>Date/Type of Last Inspection:</b>	Unknown	<b>Certified Max Gross Wt.:</b>	1670 lbs
<b>Time Since Last Inspection:</b>	0 Hrs	<b>Engines:</b>	1 Reciprocating
<b>Airframe Total Time:</b>		<b>Engine Manufacturer:</b>	LYCOMING
<b>ELT:</b>	Installed, activated	<b>Engine Model/Series:</b>	O-235-L2C
<b>Registered Owner:</b>		<b>Rated Power:</b>	112 Horsepower
<b>Operator:</b>	BELLE ISLE INT'L ACFT SALES	<b>Operating Certificate(s) Held:</b>	None
<b>Operator Does Business As:</b>		<b>Operator Designator Code:</b>	

## Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

<b>Conditions at Accident Site:</b>	Visual (VMC)	<b>Condition of Light:</b>	Day
<b>Observation Facility, Elevation:</b>	AHN ,807 ft msl	<b>Distance from Accident Site:</b>	32 Nautical Miles
<b>Observation Time:</b>	16:50 Local	<b>Direction from Accident Site:</b>	126°
<b>Lowest Cloud Condition:</b>	Scattered / 4000 ft AGL	<b>Visibility</b>	10 miles
<b>Lowest Ceiling:</b>	None	<b>Visibility (RVR):</b>	
<b>Wind Speed/Gusts:</b>	7 knots /	<b>Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:</b>	/
<b>Wind Direction:</b>	320°	<b>Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:</b>	/
<b>Altimeter Setting:</b>		<b>Temperature/Dew Point:</b>	-18°C / -18°C
<b>Precipitation and Obscuration:</b>	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
<b>Departure Point:</b>		<b>Type of Flight Plan Filed:</b>	None
<b>Destination:</b>		<b>Type of Clearance:</b>	None
<b>Departure Time:</b>	16:00 Local	<b>Type of Airspace:</b>	

## Airport Information

<b>Airport:</b>	LEE GILMER MEMORIAL GVL	<b>Runway Surface Type:</b>	
<b>Airport Elevation:</b>	1275 ft msl	<b>Runway Surface Condition:</b>	
<b>Runway Used:</b>	29	<b>IFR Approach:</b>	None
<b>Runway Length/Width:</b>	4001 ft / 100 ft	<b>VFR Approach/Landing:</b>	Full stop;Traffic pattern

## Wreckage and Impact Information

<b>Crew Injuries:</b>	1 None	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Substantial
<b>Passenger Injuries:</b>		<b>Aircraft Fire:</b>	None
<b>Ground Injuries:</b>	N/A	<b>Aircraft Explosion:</b>	None
<b>Total Injuries:</b>	1 None	<b>Latitude, Longitude:</b>	

## Administrative Information

<b>Investigator In Charge (IIC):</b>	Strickland, Scott
<b>Additional Participating Persons:</b>	JOE RICHARDS; ATLANTA , GA
<b>Original Publish Date:</b>	June 26, 1992
<b>Last Revision Date:</b>	
<b>Investigation Class:</b>	<a href="#">Class</a>
<b>Note:</b>	
<b>Investigation Docket:</b>	<a href="https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=8057">https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=8057</a>

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) is an independent federal agency charged by Congress with investigating every civil aviation accident in the United States and significant events in other modes of transportation—railroad, transit, highway, marine, pipeline, and commercial space. We determine the probable causes of the accidents and events we investigate, and issue safety recommendations aimed at preventing future occurrences. In addition, we conduct transportation safety research studies and offer information and other assistance to family members and survivors for each accident or event we investigate. We also serve as the appellate authority for enforcement actions involving aviation and mariner certificates issued by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and US Coast Guard, and we adjudicate appeals of civil penalty actions taken by the FAA.

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](#).