



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Swainsboro, Georgia	Accident Number:	ERA12CA190
Date & Time:	February 17, 2012, 19:30 Local	Registration:	N47863
Aircraft:	Piper PA-32R-300	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:	Controlled flight into terr/obj (CFIT)	Injuries:	7 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The pilot reported that the airplane was approaching the destination airport on the base leg of the traffic pattern in night visual meteorological conditions. At that time, the runway lights were set on high intensity, which diluted the threshold lights. Additionally, the pilot stated that the red localizer antenna hazard lights distracted him (they were located about 750 feet before the runway threshold). He further stated that he was too low and struck trees during final approach. The airplane impacted trees with both wings about 2,400 feet before the runway threshold. The impact with trees resulted in damage to the left wing spar, lower fuselage, and the stabilator. The pilot stated that there were no preimpact mechanical malfunctions with the airplane. Following the accident, the airport manager checked all runway lighting and found them to be operational.

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 the proper glidepath during final approach in night visual meteorological conditions, which resulted in a collision with trees.

Findings

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

Factual Information

History of Flight

Approach-VFR pattern final	Controlled flight into terr/obj (CFIT) (Defining event)
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Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial	Age:	64, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land; Multi-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Left
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 2 With waivers/limitations	Last FAA Medical Exam:	April 20, 2011
Occupational Pilot:	No	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	April 23, 2011
Flight Time:	4500 hours (Total, all aircraft), 300 hours (Total, this make and model), 4000 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 15 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 5 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 0 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Piper	Registration:	N47863
Model/Series:	PA-32R-300	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	32R-7880025
Landing Gear Type:	Retractable - Tricycle	Seats:	6
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	3600 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:		Engine Manufacturer:	LYCOMING
ELT:	Installed, not activated	Engine Model/Series:	IO-540
Registered Owner:	ALL PRO AUTO PARTS INC	Rated Power:	300 Horsepower
Operator:	Ronnie Osburn	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Night
Observation Facility, Elevation:	SBO,327 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	0 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	19:35 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	0°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	/	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:		Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30.06 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	12°C / 11°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Winter Haven, FL (GIF)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	IFR
Destination:	Swainsboro, GA (SBO)	Type of Clearance:	IFR
Departure Time:	17:20 Local	Type of Airspace:	

Airport Information

Airport:	Emanuel County Airport SBO	Runway Surface Type:	Asphalt
Airport Elevation:	324 ft msl	Runway Surface Condition:	Dry
Runway Used:	31	IFR Approach:	Visual
Runway Length/Width:	6021 ft / 100 ft	VFR Approach/Landing:	Full stop;Traffic pattern

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	6 None	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	7 None	Latitude, Longitude:	32.609165,-82.370002(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Gretz, Robert
Additional Participating Persons:	Stephen DaCosta; FAA/FSDO; Atlanta, GA
Original Publish Date:	July 18, 2012
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=82946

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