



AVIATION



HIGHWAY



MARINE



RAILROAD



PIPELINE

Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Tehachapi, California	Accident Number:	WPR13CA065
Date & Time:	December 7, 2012, 16:55 Local	Registration:	N8595V
Aircraft:	Bellanca 7ECA	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:	VFR encounter with IMC	Injuries:	1 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The non-instrument-rated pilot stated that prior to departure, weather reports indicated that clear sky conditions prevailed at the departure airport with areas of fog at his destination. Despite the possibility of fog at his destination, he decided to attempt the flight with the intention of diverting to an alternate airport if the weather conditions deteriorated. While en route over mountainous terrain, he observed fog encroaching the foothills near the destination airport. The pilot attempted to listen to the airport's automated weather observation system but could only discern the altimeter reading due to radio static. He initiated a descent to the traffic pattern altitude and observed fog approaching the airport's perimeter. The pilot further stated that as the airplane was on the final approach path, about 3 miles from the airport, the visibility began to decrease. In an effort to maintain visual contact with the airport, he maneuvered the airplane below a fog bank and elected to continue the approach in instrument meteorological conditions. The airplane descended to about 500 feet above ground level and became surrounded by fog, resulting in the pilot losing visual reference. Shortly thereafter, the airplane touched down in a plowed field and rolled onto its right side, sustaining substantial damage to the fuselage and the right wing. Weather records revealed that at the time of the pilot's initial weather briefing, the destination airport was reporting instrument meteorological conditions. The accident occurred just before dusk. The pilot reported no preimpact mechanical malfunctions or failures with the airplane that would have precluded normal operation.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The non-instrument-rated pilot's continued descent into instrument meteorological conditions during the landing approach and his loss of situational awareness, which resulted in a collision

with terrain.

Findings

Personnel issues	Decision making/judgment - Pilot
Personnel issues	Situational awareness - Pilot
Environmental issues	Fog - Effect on operation
Environmental issues	Fog - Decision related to condition
Personnel issues	Total instrument experience - Pilot

Factual Information

History of Flight

Approach	VFR encounter with IMC (Defining event)
Approach	Loss of visual reference
Approach	Loss of control in flight
Uncontrolled descent	Collision with terr/obj (non-CFIT)

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	31,Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Front
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	None	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 3 Without waivers/limitations	Last FAA Medical Exam:	June 11, 2010
Occupational Pilot:		Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	July 15, 2011
Flight Time:	200 hours (Total, all aircraft), 197 hours (Total, this make and model), 165 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 11 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 2 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Bellanca	Registration:	N8595V
Model/Series:	7ECA	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Aerobatic; Normal	Serial Number:	1076-75
Landing Gear Type:	Tailwheel	Seats:	2
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	August 1, 2012 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	1650 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	18 Hrs	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	2277 Hrs as of last inspection	Engine Manufacturer:	LYCOMING
ELT:	C91A installed, activated, did not aid in locating accident	Engine Model/Series:	O-235 SERIES
Registered Owner:	On file	Rated Power:	115 Horsepower
Operator:	On file	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Instrument (IMC)	Condition of Light:	Dusk
Observation Facility, Elevation:	KTSP, 4001 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	3 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	16:55 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	110°
Lowest Cloud Condition:		Visibility	2 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	Overcast / 300 ft AGL	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	8 knots / None	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	320°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30.07 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	7°C / 7°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	N/A - None - Mist		
Departure Point:	Santa Paula, CA (KSZP)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	Tehachapi, CA (KTSP)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	16:10 Local	Type of Airspace:	

Airport Information

Airport:	Tehachapi KTSP	Runway Surface Type:	Asphalt
Airport Elevation:	4001 ft msl	Runway Surface Condition:	Dry
Runway Used:	29	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:	4031 ft / 75 ft	VFR Approach/Landing:	Straight-in

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:		Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 None	Latitude, Longitude:	35.134998,-118.439163(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Simpson, Elliott
Additional Participating Persons:	Danny F Tisher; Federal Aviation Administration FSDO; Van Nuys, CA
Original Publish Date:	April 10, 2013
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=85762

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