Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	La Pointe, Wisconsin	**Accident Number:**	CEN13FA351
Date & Time:	June 15, 2013, 18:28 Local	**Registration:**	N8815P
Aircraft:	Piper PA-24-260	**Aircraft Damage:**	Destroyed
Defining Event:	Landing gear not configured	**Injuries:**	2 Fatal
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The pilot was landing the airplane after a cross-country flight. A witness heard squealing and the sound of screeching tires. He looked toward the runway and saw the airplane bouncing out of control. He reported that the airplane then went to full throttle and pitched nose-up to about 45 degrees as it started climbing. The witness thought the airplane was going to attempt another landing. He turned around, but subsequently heard an explosion. The airplane impacted in a nearby wooded area and a ground fire subsequently occurred. Broken tree branches indicated a linear downward path to where the airplane came to rest. All three propeller blade tips were ground down, consistent with contact with the runway. An examination of the runway showed a series of parallel witness slash marks consistent with propeller contact. The runway exhibited a white media transfer that approximated the path of the slash marks. Strips of copper were also found on the runway. The airplane was equipped with a white antenna mounted to its underbelly and the recovered strips of copper were consistent in shape with sections of the antenna assembly's copper sense plate. No anomalies with the airplane's engine or systems were found. Although the landing gear was found extended at the accident site, based on the evidence on the runway and the damage to the propellers and the underbelly antenna, it is likely that the pilot did not lower the landing gear during his first landing attempt.

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 airplane control after deciding to go around after a gear-up landing, resulting in an aerodynamic stall.

Findings

Personnel issues	Aircraft control - Pilot
Aircraft	(general) - Not attained/maintained
Personnel issues	Forgotten action/omission - Pilot
Aircraft	(general) - Not used/operated

Factual Information

History of Flight

Landing-landing roll	Landing gear not configured (Defining event)
Landing-landing roll	Abnormal runway contact
Landing-aborted after touchdown	Attempted remediation/recovery
Initial climb	Loss of control in flight
Uncontrolled descent	Collision with terr/obj (non-CFIT)

On June 15, 2013, about 1828 central daylight time, a Piper PA-24-260 airplane, N8815P, impacted trees and terrain during a go-around from runway 22 at the Major Gilbert Field Airport (4R5), near La Pointe, Wisconsin. A post impact ground fire occurred. The pilot and pilot rated passenger were fatally injured. The airplane was destroyed during the impact and ground fire. The airplane was registered to and was operated by 8815 Papa LLC under the provisions of Title 14 Code of Federal Regulations Part 91 as a personal flight. Day visual flight rules conditions (VFR) conditions prevailed for the flight, which did not operate on a VFR flight plan. The flight originated from the John F Kennedy Memorial Airport (ASX), near Ashland, Wisconsin, at time unknown.

The airplane was based at the La Crosse Municipal Airport (LSE), near La Crosse, Wisconsin. According to information from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), the airplane departed from LSE on June 15, 2013, at 1102. An entry in an airport visitor's log at ASX showed that the pilot signed in on June 15, 2013, at time unknown. The entry showed that the flight was a recreational flight, which departed from LSE with two occupants on board. That entry did not have a destination listed. Airport fueling records at ASX were reviewed and no fuel services were rendered to the pilot representing N8815P.

A witness at 4R5 stated that he heard an airplane engine, heard "squealing," and heard sounds like screeching tires. He looked at the runway and saw the airplane bouncing "out of control" on the runway. It appeared that the airplane flew in from the northeast and was attempting to land. The airplane subsequently "went to full throttle" and pitched up to about 45 degrees where it started climbing. The witness saw the airplane fly to the right and he thought it was going to circle around to attempt another landing. He turned around and subsequently heard an explosion. He looked back, saw a plume of black smoke, and called 911.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	**Age:**	63
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-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:**	Yes
Medical Certification:	Class 3 With waivers/limitations	**Last FAA Medical Exam:**	May 29, 2012
Occupational Pilot:	No	**Last Flight Review or Equivalent:**	August 29, 2011
Flight Time:	(Estimated) 1500 hours (Total, all aircraft), 689 hours (Total, this make and model)		

Pilot-rated passenger Information

Certificate:	Private	**Age:**	
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land	**Seat Occupied:**	Right
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	**Restraint Used:**	
Instrument Rating(s):	None	**Second Pilot Present:**	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	**Toxicology Performed:**	Yes
Medical Certification:	Class 3 With waivers/limitations	**Last FAA Medical Exam:**	June 6, 2006
Occupational Pilot:	No	**Last Flight Review or Equivalent:**	
Flight Time:	(Estimated) 280 hours (Total, all aircraft)		

The pilot held a private pilot certificate, with an airplane single engine land and instrument airplane ratings. The pilot's most recent FAA third-class medical certificate was issued on May 29, 2012. The pilot's medical certificate had a limitation for corrective lenses. He reported that he had accumulated 1500 hours of total flight time at the time of the application for that medical certificate and that he had accumulated 50 hours of flight time during the six months prior to that application. The pilot also reported that he was taking Rosuvastatin, Ramipril, and Asprin. Logbook entries showed that the pilot was endorsed to fly complex airplanes on April 1, 2001 and was endorsed to fly high performance airplanes on July 17, 1999. His last flight review was endorsed on August 29, 2011. A relative of the pilot reported that the pilot had accumulated about 689 hours of flight time in PA-24-260 airplanes.

The pilot rated passenger held a private pilot certificate with a single engine land rating. His most recent FAA third-class medical certificate was issued on June 6, 2006. His medical certificate had a limitation for corrective lenses for near vision. He reported that he had accumulated 280 hours of total flight time at the time of the application for that medical certificate and that he had accumulated 8 hours of flight time during the six months prior to that application.

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Piper	**Registration:**	N8815P
Model/Series:	PA-24-260	**Aircraft Category:**	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		**Amateur Built:**	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	**Serial Number:**	24-4270
Landing Gear Type:	Retractable - Tricycle	**Seats:**	4
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	July 7, 2012 Annual	**Certified Max Gross Wt.:**	2900 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		**Engines:**	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	2922 Hrs as of last inspection	**Engine Manufacturer:**	LYCOMING
ELT:	Installed, not activated	**Engine Model/Series:**	IO-540-D4A5
Registered Owner:	8815 PAPA LLC	**Rated Power:**	310 Horsepower
Operator:	8815 PAPA LLC	**Operating Certificate(s) Held:**	None

N8815P, a 1965-model Piper PA-24-260 Comanche, with serial number 24-4270, was a low wing, single-engine, four-place monoplane, which had retractable tricycle landing gear. The airplane was constructed predominately of aluminum alloy materials. The airplane was powered by a Lycoming IO-540-D4A5, six-cylinder, reciprocating engine, marked with serial number L-2144-48. The engine drove a Hartzell, 3-bladed, all-metal, constant-speed propeller. The propeller was installed in accordance with supplemental type certificated SA288CH and was approved on a major repair and alteration form dated October 14, 1997. Another major repair and alteration form dated November 17, 1989, indicated that a King KA 42B automatic direction finder (ADF) was installed on the airplane. The housing of the ADF antenna is white colored and its housing supports an internal copper sense plate. A picture of the airplane revealed that the ADF antenna was installed on the fuselage's belly skin. A relative of the pilot reported that the airplane's last annual inspection was completed on July 7, 2012, and it accumulated 2,922 hours of total time. The airplane was flown approximately 33 hours in the year prior to that annual inspection.

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	**Condition of Light:**	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	KASX,826 ft msl	**Distance from Accident Site:**	16 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	17:53 Local	**Direction from Accident Site:**	204°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Few / 2200 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:	29.85 inches Hg	**Temperature/Dew Point:**	22°C / 18°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Ashland, WI (ASX)	**Type of Flight Plan Filed:**	None
Destination:	La Pointe, WI (4R5)	**Type of Clearance:**	None
Departure Time:		**Type of Airspace:**	

At 1753, the recorded weather at ASX, located about 16 nautical miles and 204 degrees from the accident site, was: wind calm; visibility 10 statute miles; sky condition few clouds at 2,200 feet; temperature 21 degrees C; dew point 18 degrees C; altimeter 29.85 inches of mercury.

At 1833, the recorded weather at 4R5 was: temperature 62.5 degrees F; dew point 58.0 degrees F; altimeter 29.81 inches of mercury; wind south southwest at 3.0 mph; humidity 84 percent.

Airport Information

Airport:	MAJOR GILBERT FIELD 4R5	**Runway Surface Type:**	Asphalt
Airport Elevation:	649 ft msl	**Runway Surface Condition:**	Dry
Runway Used:	22	**IFR Approach:**	None
Runway Length/Width:	3000 ft / 75 ft	**VFR Approach/Landing:**	Go around

The 4R5 airport was a publicly owned, non-towered airport located about 2 miles north east of the city of La Pointe, Wisconsin, at an elevation of 649 feet. Its runway 4/22 was a 3,000 foot by 75 foot asphalt runway, which was marked as a non-precision runway.

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Fatal	**Aircraft Damage:**	Destroyed
Passenger Injuries:	1 Fatal	**Aircraft Fire:**	On-ground
Ground Injuries:	N/A	**Aircraft Explosion:**	On-ground
Total Injuries:	2 Fatal	**Latitude, Longitude:**	46.787223,-90.766113

The airplane impacted a wooded area about one-half nautical mile southwest of runway 22's threshold. Tree branches were broken in a linear path and that path downward through the trees was nearly vertical to where the airplane came to rest. The airplane came to rest inverted on a heading of about 40 degrees magnetic. The nose landing gear strut, its fork, and its tire and an outboard section of the right wing were found separated from the airplane and all separated components were found near the main impact site. All major components of the airplane were accounted for at the accident site.

An on-scene examination of the wreckage was conducted. The center portion of the fuselage was melted, consumed, and deformed consistent with a ground fire. First responders cut control cables and marked them. All flight control cables were traced and flight control continuity was established. The throttle, propeller, and mixture controls were found in their forward positions. The engine sump was melted. Engine control cables were connected to their respective throttle and mixture controls on the fuel servo and the propeller control cable was attached to its governor. The flap jackscrew measurement was consistent with a 10-degree flap extended setting. The landing gear cable extension measurements were consistent with extended landing gear. One landing gear tire was melted and the other two landing gear tires did not exhibit any abrasions or flat spots. The magnetos and vacuum pump were melted and deformed. The propeller hub was attached to the engine and all three propeller blades exhibited ground tips consistent with contact with the runway. Due to impact and fire damage, the total fuel quantity on board the airplane at the time of the accident could not be confirmed.

Runway 22 was examined. The surface of the runway, about one tenth of a nautical mile from the start of its threshold, exhibited witness slash marks consistent with contact with the propeller. The path of the witness marks proceeded down the runway just left of centerline and the marks migrated to the right. A white colored media transfer was also found on the runway. The media transfer path approximated the path of the slash marks. There were no trails of landing gear tire witness marks associated with the path of the slash marks and media transfer marks. Copper colored strips of metal were found on the runway. The strips of metal were consistent in shape with sections of a KA 42B ADF antenna assembly's copper sense plate.

Medical and Pathological Information

An autopsy was performed on the pilot by the Dane County Medical Examiner's Office, on June 17, 2013, where toxicological samples were taken. The pilot's cause of death was reported as multiple blunt force trauma injuries.

The FAA Civil Aerospace Medical Institute prepared a Final Forensic Toxicology Accident Report in reference to the pilot's toxicological samples. The report indicated:

Ibuprofen detected in Urine
Rosuvastatin detected in Urine
Rosuvastatin detected in Liver

The FAA Forensic Toxicology's WebDrugs website description of Ibuprofen, in part, indicated it was a nonnarcotic analgesic and anti-inflammatory agent.

The FAA Forensic Toxicology's WebDrugs website description of Rosuvastatin, in part, indicated it was a member of the drug class of statins, used to treat high cholesterol and related conditions, and to prevent cardiovascular disease.

The FAA Forensic Toxicology's WebDrugs website description of Ramipril, in part, indicated it was an angiotensinconverting enzyme (ACE) inhibitor, used to treat hypertension and congestive heart failure.

A common description of Aspirin indicated it was an over-the-counter non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID) used to treat aches and pains and as a preventative measure against heart attacks.

An autopsy was performed on the pilot rated passenger by the Dane County Medical Examiner's Office, on June 17, 2013, where toxicological samples were taken. The pilot rated passenger's cause of death was reported as multiple blunt force trauma injuries.

The FAA Civil Aerospace Medical Institute prepared a Final Forensic Toxicology Accident Report in reference to the pilot rated passenger's toxicological samples. The report was negative for the tests performed.

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Malinowski, Edward
Additional Participating Persons:	Darrell McCullion; Federal Aviation Administration; Milwaukee, WI Michael McClure; Piper; Duncanville, TX J M Childers; Lycoming; White, GA
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