



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	BIG RAPIDS, Michigan	Accident Number:	CHI94LA052
Date & Time:	December 17, 1993, 06:35 Local	Registration:	N8919G
Aircraft:	CESSNA 404	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	1 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 135: Air taxi & commuter - Non-scheduled		

Analysis

EN ROUTE THE PILOT LEARNED THAT HIS DESTINATION VOR WAS OUT OF SERVICE. HOWEVER, AS HE APPROACHED THE VOR, IT WAS TURNED ON SO HE COULD SHOOT THE APPROACH. CONCERNED THAT THE VOR WOULD ONLY BE ON FOR A SHORT TIME, THE PILOT 'HURRIED THE APPROACH FROM THAT MOMENT ON.' DURING THE APPROACH THE AIRPLANE STRUCK WHAT THE PILOT THOUGHT WERE BIRDS. AFTER LANDING, HE EXAMINED THE AIRPLANE FOR DAMAGE AND FOUND DEBRIS FROM A TREE STRIKE.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: THE PILOT'S DESCENT BELOW THE MINIMUM DESCENT ALTITUDE.

Findings

Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH OBJECT
Phase of Operation: APPROACH

Findings

1. (C) MINIMUM DESCENT ALTITUDE - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND
2. (F) SELF-INDUCED PRESSURE - PILOT IN COMMAND
3. OBJECT - TREE(S)

Factual Information

The instrument rated commercial pilot was flying in instrument meteorological conditions on an IFR flight plan to Roben-Hood Airport (77D) Big Rapids, Michigan on December 17, 1993. While enroute, the pilot learned that the White Cloud (HIC) VOR was out of service. As N8919G approached HIC VOR via radar vectors, Minneapolis Center turned on the VOR so that the pilot would be able to fly an instrument approach. According to the pilot's written statement on NTSB Form 6120.1/2, the pilot was almost over the VOR at a cruising altitude of 4000 feet when he received an approach clearance. Concerned that the VOR would be on for only a short time, the pilot "hurried the approach from that moment on." The pilot recounted being at 1600 feet MSL when he hit what he thought were birds. After landing, the pilot examined the aircraft for damage and found debris from impacting trees. A map prepared by Minneapolis Air Route Traffic Control Center indicates N8919G at 2000 feet at the point of contact with the trees. The pilot reported no injuries. The aircraft sustained substantial damage. The scheduled cargo flight, operating under 14 CFR Part 135 for Superior Aviation, Lansing, Michigan, departed from Lansing, Michigan about 0600 CST.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial	Age:	58, 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 Valid Medical-w/ waivers/lim	Last FAA Medical Exam:	September 23, 1993
Occupational Pilot:	UNK	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	10000 hours (Total, all aircraft), 2000 hours (Total, this make and model), 10000 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 100 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 30 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 2 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	CESSNA	Registration:	N8919G
Model/Series:	404 404	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	404-0098
Landing Gear Type:	Retractable - Tricycle	Seats:	2
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	Continuous airworthiness	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	6300 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	10 Hrs	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	9000 Hrs	Engine Manufacturer:	CONTINENTAL
ELT:	Installed	Engine Model/Series:	GTISO-520
Registered Owner:	SUPERIOR AVIATION	Rated Power:	375 Horsepower
Operator:	SUPERIOR AVIATION	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	On-demand air taxi (135)
Operator Does Business As:		Operator Designator Code:	

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Instrument (IMC)	Condition of Light:	Dawn
Observation Facility, Elevation:	MKG ,628 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	47 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	06:50 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	224°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Unknown	Visibility	4 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	Overcast / 900 ft AGL	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	4 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	120°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	2°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	N/A - None - Haze		
Departure Point:	LANSING , MI (LAN)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	IFR
Destination:		Type of Clearance:	IFR
Departure Time:	06:00 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class E

Airport Information

Airport:	ROBEN-HOOD 77D	Runway Surface Type:	
Airport Elevation:		Runway Surface Condition:	
Runway Used:	0	IFR Approach:	VOR/DME
Runway Length/Width:		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:	43.700382,-85.480422(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Dinwiddie, Carl
Additional Participating Persons:	WOODY BEST; GRAND RAPIDS , MI
Original Publish Date:	January 18, 1995
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=9441

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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](#).