



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Data Summary

Location:	SMACKOVER, AR	Accident Number:	FTW99FA060
Date & Time:	01/02/1999, 0650 CST	Registration:	N7676C
Aircraft:	Piper PA-32-300R	Injuries:	1 Fatal
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The instrument-rated private pilot lost control of the airplane while maneuvering in night instrument meteorological conditions. The pilot originally requested a lower altitude in an attempt to make a VFR approach to El Dorado's Downtown Airport (F43). The pilot was unsuccessful so he requested an ILS approach to South Arkansas Regional Airport (ELD). The controller informed the pilot that he had lost radar contact with the airplane and asked the pilot if he could navigate to the outer marker for the approach. The pilot answered in the affirmative and was cleared for the approach. Radar contact with the airplane was lost for about 27 minutes. During this time, witnesses reported hearing an airplane flying very low numerous times over their homes. Subsequently, the controller re-identified the airplane on radar south of F43 climbing through 2,000 feet msl and turning towards the north. Attempts to reestablish radio contact with the pilot were unsuccessful. The last radar returns received indicated the airplane was in a right hand turn at 3,000 feet msl. Examination of the airplane revealed no evidence of any pre-impact mechanical discrepancies.

Probable Cause

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The pilot's spatial disorientation resulting in a loss of control of the airplane and the ensuing stall/spin. Factors were the low ceilings and the night condition.

Findings

Occurrence #1: LOSS OF CONTROL - IN FLIGHT
Phase of Operation: MANEUVERING

Findings

1. (C) AIRCRAFT CONTROL - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND
2. (C) SPATIAL DISORIENTATION - PILOT IN COMMAND
3. STALL/SPIN - ENCOUNTERED - PILOT IN COMMAND
4. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - LOW CEILING
5. (F) LIGHT CONDITION - NIGHT

Occurrence #2: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH OBJECT
Phase of Operation: DESCENT - UNCONTROLLED

Findings

6. OBJECT - TREE(S)

Occurrence #3: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER
Phase of Operation: DESCENT - UNCONTROLLED

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	69
Airplane Rating(s):	Multi-engine Land; Single-engine Land	Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Instructor Rating(s):	None
Flight Time:	3800 hours (Total, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Piper	Registration:	N7676C
Model/Series:	PA-32-300R PA-32-300R	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Operator:	GRIFFITH H. FERRELL JR.	Engine Manufacturer:	Lycoming
Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None	Engine Model/Series:	IO-540-K1A5D
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Instrument Conditions	Condition of Light:	Night/Dark
Observation Facility, Elevation:	ELD, 277 ft msl	Weather Information Source:	Weather Observation Facility
Lowest Ceiling:	Overcast / 400 ft agl	Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:	14 knots / 21 knots, 310°
Temperature:	9°C	Visibility	7 Miles
Precipitation and Obscuration:			
Departure Point:	ARKADELPHIA, AR (M89)	Destination:	EL DORADO, AR (F43)

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Fatal	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Passenger Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Latitude, Longitude:			

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC): NICOLE LUPINO Adopted Date: 05/12/2000

Investigation Docket: NTSB accident and incident dockets serve as permanent archival information for the NTSB's investigations. Dockets released prior to June 1, 2009 are publicly available from the NTSB's Record Management Division at pubinq@ntsb.gov, or at 800-877-6799. Dockets released after this date are available at <http://dms.nts.gov/pubdms/>.

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