



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Final Report

Location:	BUCKEYE, AZ	Accident Number:	LAX94LA207
Date & Time:	05/01/1994, 1915 MST	Registration:	NONE
Aircraft:	GRIFFIN TITAN TORNADO	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Defining Event:		Injuries:	1 Fatal

Flight Conducted Under: Part 91: General Aviation -

Analysis

Witnesses stated that the student pilot, who had no confirmed flight experience, assembled the aircraft on the day of the accident at the airport from a kit of preassembled major components. The pilot told the witnesses that he was going to perform some taxi tests and proceeded to do several taxi runs along the runway. The aircraft was then observed to line up on the runway, add what was described as full power, then takeoff. The witnesses said the aircraft leveled off about 30 feet above the runway and flew down the complete length of the pavement. Past the departure end of the runway, the aircraft abruptly pitched nose down and impacted the ground about 1,000 feet from the runway end. An FAA inspector reported that control system continuity was established throughout the aircraft during his examination. The witnesses reported that the engine sounds were consistent and strong up to the point of ground impact. A review of FAA system records revealed no evidence of a registration or airworthiness certificate application by the pilot.

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 control of the aircraft. A factor in the accident was his complete lack of any flight experience or instruction.

Findings

Occurrence #1: LOSS OF CONTROL - IN FLIGHT
Phase of Operation: TAKEOFF - INITIAL CLIMB

Findings

1. (C) AIRCRAFT CONTROL - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND
2. (F) LACK OF TOTAL EXPERIENCE - PILOT IN COMMAND

Occurrence #2: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER
Phase of Operation: DESCENT - UNCONTROLLED

Factual Information

On May 1, 1994, at 1915 mountain standard time, a noncertificated and unregistered homebuilt Titan Tornado airplane collided with the ground near the Buckeye, Arizona, airport. The accident occurred during the first test flight following construction of the aircraft. The aircraft was owned, constructed, and flown by the pilot. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed at the time and included calm winds. The aircraft was destroyed in the ground collision sequence. The pilot, who held a student pilot certificate and was the sole occupant, sustained fatal injuries. The flight was originating at the time of the accident for a local test flight.

A Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) airworthiness inspector from the Scottsdale, Arizona, Flight Standards District Office responded to the accident site where he examined the wreckage and interviewed witnesses. The witnesses stated that the pilot, who had no confirmed flight experience, assembled the aircraft on the day of the accident at the airport from a kit of preassembled major components. The pilot told the witnesses that he was going to perform some taxi tests and proceeded to do several taxi runs along the runway. The aircraft was then observed to line up on the runway, add what was described as full power, then takeoff. The witnesses said the aircraft leveled off about 30 feet above the runway and flew down the complete length of the pavement. Past the departure end of the runway, the aircraft abruptly pitched nose down and impacted the ground about 1,000 feet from the runway end.

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An autopsy and toxicological tests were performed by the Maricopa County Medical Examiner's Office. The toxicological tests were negative for alcohol and screened drug substances.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Student	Age:	47, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	None	Seat Occupied:	Front
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	Seatbelt, Shoulder harness
Instrument Rating(s):	None	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	Yes
Medical Certification:	Class 3 Valid Medical--w/ waivers/lim.	Last FAA Medical Exam:	11/09/1993
Occupational Pilot:		Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:			

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	GRIFFIN	Registration:	NONE
Model/Series:	TITAN TORNADO TITAN TORN	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	Yes
Airworthiness Certificate:		Serial Number:	
Landing Gear Type:	Tricycle	Seats:	2
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	Unknown	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	1000 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:		Engine Manufacturer:	ROTAX
ELT:	Not installed	Engine Model/Series:	582
Registered Owner:	AIRCRAFT NOT REGISTERED	Rated Power:	66 hp
Operator:	JAMES R. GRIFFIN, JR.	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual Conditions	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	, 0 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	0 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	0000	Direction from Accident Site:	0°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear / 0 ft agl	Visibility	30 Miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None / 0 ft agl	Visibility (RVR):	0 ft
Wind Speed/Gusts:	Calm /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:		Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:		Temperature/Dew Point:	
Precipitation and Obscuration:			
Departure Point:	(BXX)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:		Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	1914 MST	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Airport Information

Airport:	BUCKEYE MUNI (BXX)	Runway Surface Type:	Asphalt
Airport Elevation:	1024 ft	Runway Surface Condition:	Dry
Runway Used:	17	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:	4300 ft / 75 ft	VFR Approach/Landing:	None

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
Total Injuries:	1 Fatal	Latitude, Longitude:	

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	JEFF RICH,	Report Date:	11/14/1994
Additional Participating Persons:	GEORGE DEMARTINI; SCOTTSDALE, AZ		
Publish Date:			
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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The Independent Safety Board Act, as codified at 49 U.S.C. Section 1154(b), precludes the admission into evidence or use of any part of an NTSB report related to an incident or accident in a civil action for damages resulting from a matter mentioned in the report. A factual report that may be admissible under 49 U.S.C. § 1154(b) is available [here](#).