



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Final Report

Location:	SAVANNAH, GA	Accident Number:	ATL96LA001
Date & Time:	10/01/1995, 1426 EDT	Registration:	N9553H
Aircraft:	Cessna 172M	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	2 Minor
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

Analysis

After requesting fuel availability for various airport's from Savannah Approach Control, the pilot declared an emergency and landed at the Hunter Army Air Field. After landing, he taxied to a remote part of the airport and removed hand made fuel lines connecting three six gallon tanks to the left wing tank. These additional tanks were stored where the rear seat had been installed. The pilot did not refuel the aircraft prior to takeoff, and after departure, the engine began to run rough. He elected to execute a precautionary landing along Savannah's Highway 516, where the aircraft collided with a road sign. The pilot then lost control, and the aircraft skidded into a guard rail and flipped over. Two pilots were aboard the aircraft. Both repeatedly changed their stories concerning who they were, and what transpired prior to the accident. An FAA examiner stated that there was approximately fifteen gallons of automotive fuel in the aircraft's right wing, and no fuel in the left wing. He also stated that the aircraft appeared to have been configured for transportation of unauthorized material.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The pilot's selection of unsuitable terrain for a precautionary landing, and his failure to maintain clearance from an obstacle (road sign) during the landing.

Findings

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

Findings

1. PRECAUTIONARY LANDING - INITIATED - PILOT IN COMMAND
2. (C) UNSUITABLE TERRAIN OR TAKEOFF/LANDING/TAXI AREA - SELECTED - PILOT IN COMMAND
3. OBJECT - SIGN
4. (C) CLEARANCE - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND

Factual Information

On October 1, 1995, about 1426 eastern daylight time, a Cessna 172, N9553H, collided with an interstate highway sign, following a loss of engine power, at Savannah, Georgia. The airplane was operated by the pilot under the provisions of 14 CFR Part 91, and visual flight rules. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed. A flight plan was not filed for the personal flight. The pilot and one passenger sustained minor injuries, and the airplane was substantially damaged. Origination of the flight was Hunter Army Air Field, Savannah, Georgia, moments before the accident.

The inspectors from the Georgia Flight Standards District Office who spoke with the pilot and examined the wreckage reported the following. The pilot's statement was inconsistent, stating at various times that the flight was destined for various locations. The rear seats had been removed from the airplane, having been replaced by a portable tank with connected hoses. Additionally, there was a lack of fuel at the accident site, even though the airplane came to rest inverted, and one wing was separated.

Prior to the accident, the flight had been in contact with Savannah Approach Control, requesting fuel availability information at certain airports. An engine malfunction was reported, and an emergency landing was made at Hunter Army Air Field. Shortly after landing, the pilot removed the hoses that were connected to the extra fuel tanks. The pilot stated that once the airplane was airborne again, the engine began to run roughly. The pilot elected to perform a precautionary landing, where the airplane collided with a highway sign, before impacting the ground and nosing over. Local police reported the accident to a Savannah air traffic facility.

Post crash investigation revealed that fifteen gallons of automotive fuel was found in the aircraft's right wing. No fuel was found in the left wing.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	56, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine Land	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	Seatbelt
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	Second Pilot Present:	Yes
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 2 Valid Medical--no waivers/lim.	Last FAA Medical Exam:	09/02/1994
Occupational Pilot:		Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	900 hours (Total, all aircraft), 550 hours (Total, this make and model), 750 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 30 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 12 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 5 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Cessna	Registration:	N9553H
Model/Series:	172M 172M	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	No
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	17266224
Landing Gear Type:	Tricycle	Seats:	2
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	05/01/1995, Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	2300 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:		Engine Manufacturer:	Lycoming
ELT:	Installed	Engine Model/Series:	O-320-E2D
Registered Owner:	THE MORGEIST GROUP	Rated Power:	150 hp
Operator:	JOHN W. WANG	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual Conditions	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	SVN, 42 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	3 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	1444 EST	Direction from Accident Site:	300°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Unknown / 0 ft agl	Visibility	10 Miles
Lowest Ceiling:	Broken / 2300 ft agl	Visibility (RVR):	0 ft
Wind Speed/Gusts:	7 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	40°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	23° C
Precipitation and Obscuration:			
Departure Point:	HUNTER ARMY A/F, GA (UNK)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:		Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	0000	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Airport Information

Airport:	HUNTER ARMY AIR FIELD (SVN)	Runway Surface Type:	
Airport Elevation:		Runway Surface Condition:	
Runway Used:	0	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:		VFR Approach/Landing:	Forced Landing

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Minor	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	1 Minor	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	2 Minor	Latitude, Longitude:	

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	PRESTON E HICKS	Report Date:	11/11/1996
Additional Participating Persons:	BOB YLLA; COLLEGE PARK,, GA		
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](#).