



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Final Report

Location:	JONES, LA	Accident Number:	FTW96FA368
Date & Time:	09/01/1996, 2105 CDT	Registration:	N8380G
Aircraft:	Cessna 150F	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Defining Event:		Injuries:	2 Fatal
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

Analysis

Before flight, the non-instrument rated pilot received a weather briefing and was advised that 'VFR was not recommended' due to IFR conditions along the route. The airplane was observed to takeoff on runway 34, then it disappeared into the fog. At about 2105, residents in the vicinity of the accident site (about 18 miles from the departure point) heard 'the steady engine sound of a low flying airplane followed by the sound of impact.' A search was initiated, and the airplane was found where it had impacted the ground in an estimated 25 degree descent. Ground visibility at the site was reported to be 'less than 50 feet in heavy wet fog.' Examination of the aircraft and engine at the accident site did not disclose any mechanical problems or evidence of preimpact malfunction.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: VFR flight into instrument meteorological conditions (VMC), and failure of the pilot (PIC) to maintain control of the airplane after becoming spatially disorientation. Factors relating to the accident were: darkness, the adverse weather condition (fog and obscuration), and the pilot's lack of instrument experience.

Findings

Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT ENCOUNTER WITH WEATHER
Phase of Operation: CRUISE

Findings

1. (F) LIGHT CONDITION - DARK NIGHT
 2. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - FOG
 3. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - OBSCURATION
 4. (C) VFR FLIGHT INTO IMC - PERFORMED - PILOT IN COMMAND
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Occurrence #2: LOSS OF CONTROL - IN FLIGHT
Phase of Operation: CRUISE

Findings

5. (C) AIRCRAFT CONTROL - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND
 6. (C) SPATIAL DISORIENTATION - PILOT IN COMMAND
 7. (F) LACK OF TOTAL INSTRUMENT TIME - PILOT IN COMMAND
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Occurrence #3: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER
Phase of Operation: DESCENT - UNCONTROLLED

Factual Information

HISTORY OF FLIGHT

On September 1, 1996, at 2105 central daylight time, a Cessna 150F airplane, N8380G, was destroyed upon impact with terrain following a loss of control while maneuvering near Jones, Louisiana. The non-instrument rated commercial pilot and his passenger were fatally injured. The airplane, owned and operated by a private individual, was being operated under Title 14 CFR Part 91. Instrument meteorological conditions prevailed at the time of the accident. A weather briefing was received and a flight plan was not filed for the personal flight. The flight originated from the Morehouse Memorial Airport in Bastrop, Louisiana, at approximately 2055.

According to relatives and personnel at the Bastrop airport, the airplane arrived from the Greenville Municipal Airport, in Greenville, Mississippi, at approximately 1635 to attend a family function nearby. The pilot called the FSS for a weather briefing before leaving the home of his relatives prior to being driven back to the airport. An employee of the airport advised the pilot about the prevailing marginal weather conditions, but the pilot elected to fly home to Greenville, as planned.

The airplane was observed departing on runway 34 and disappearing into the fog on their proposed 62 nautical mile night cross country flight. At 2105, residents in the vicinity of the accident site reported "the steady engine sound of a low flying airplane followed by the sound of impact." They made a 911 call and initiated a search to locate the airplane with flashlights and the headlights of their vehicles. Ground visibility at the site was reported as "less than 50 feet in heavy wet fog."

Ten minutes after midnight, a relative of one of the occupants called from Greenville to report that the airplane had not arrived. Law enforcement agencies intensified the search and the wreckage was located in a cotton field at approximately 0300. The accident site was 18 nautical miles from the airport of departure, approximately 2 miles north of the direct route of flight to Greenville. There were no reported eyewitnesses to the accident.

PERSONNEL INFORMATION

The non-instrument rated commercial pilot took his first flight lesson on September 8, 1995, earning his commercial pilot certificate on January 24, 1996. He had recently completed an agricultural application course in which he was provided with 40 hours of ground school and 45 hours of dual flight instruction in 4 different aircraft. He was employed by McReady Flying Services of Bonita, Louisiana, as an aerial application pilot.

The non-rated 29 year old passenger, who was seated in the right seat, was the pilot's oldest brother. Personnel at the airport that talked to him the afternoon of the accident and relatives of the brother both stated that he had expressed an interest in taking flying lessons and eventually become an agricultural pilot; however, he had not taken any flying lessons as of the time of the accident.

Two pilot logbooks were found in a pilot's flight bag in the airplane. One of the logbooks belonged to the pilot, while the second logbook, which did not have any entries other than a name and address, belonged to the airplane's owner. The logbooks were copied by the IIC and returned to the owner.

A review of the pilot's logbook revealed that the pilot had accumulated a total of 53 hours of night time, of which 15.2 hours of were within the preceding 90 days. The logbook also revealed that he had accumulated a total of 10.5 hours of simulated instrument time, with no time logged in the last 90 days. A copy of the pilot's logbook is enclosed.

AIRCRAFT INFORMATION

The 1966 model airplane was purchased by the current owner in May 1996. The airplane was not equipped with an ATC transponder nor shoulder harnesses for the occupants. The owner of the airplane stated that the aircraft and engine logbooks were kept in a pouch in the back of the airplane; however, they could not be located at the accident site. The logbooks were later located under the airplane by the wreckage recovery crew.

The airplane was not serviced or refueled during their stop at Bastrop. According to the engine logbook, the last maintenance recorded on the engine was on May 8, 1996, when the right magneto was removed due to "weak firing." The magneto was removed, disassembled, inspected and repaired.

An estimate of the weight of the airplane at the time of the accident places the airplane within its weight and balance limits. A review of the airframe and engine records by the investigator-in-charge, did not reveal any anomalies or uncorrected maintenance defects prior to the flight.

METEOROLOGICAL INFORMATION

The pilot received a weather briefing from the DeRidder Automated Flight Service Station at 1955. The pilot was advised that no flight precautions existed along the route of flight; however, he was told that "VFR was not recommended" due to IFR conditions in the Monroe area.

According to personnel at the Bastrop airport, at the time of the airplane's departure, a 600 foot ragged ceiling (overcast) prevailed with visibility reported as 1.5 miles in fog. Weather reports for the area are enclosed. Recorded radar data was requested from Memphis Center, but none was available.

WRECKAGE AND IMPACT INFORMATION

The 3 foot tall cotton plants found short of the airplane's initial point of impact were closely examined and documented. Slash marks, broken branches, and gouges were found on the cotton plants at a point 30 inches above the ground. The imprint of the nose landing gear tire was found on the soft ground 5.50 feet from the base of the first disturbed cotton plant. Dimensioning of the affected plants and ground imprint revealed an impact angle of approximately 25 degrees.

Ground scars, gouges and imprints along the wreckage path were found on a measured magnetic heading of 010 degrees. The fuselage came to a stop approximately 54 feet from the initial point of impact in the inverted position on a measured heading of 210 degrees. A fiberglass wing tip fairing and a fragment of green lens, identified as the wing tip navigation light for the right wing, was located at the initial point of impact.

The carburetor heat box, components of the engine air intake and exhaust systems, and the bottom of the engine lower cowling were found in a 30 inch wide, by 14 inch deep crater at the initial point of impact.

The propeller assembly was found just forward of the initial impact crater and had separated

from the engine at the propeller flange. One blade was twisted and curled rearward at about the midway point, exhibiting heavy rubbing on the cambered side, with leading edge scratches. The opposite blade was gently curved aft.

Fuel, with the appearance and smell of 100LL aviation fuel, was found on the left fuel cell. The right fuel cell was compromised. A 2-cell military style gooseneck flashlight was found in the wreckage. The function switch was found in the "on" position.

The powerplant was found separated from the airframe. All of the engine components driven by the accessory section of the engine were found separated from the engine. The vacuum pump, engine starter, and the magnetic compass were not recovered with the wreckage. The magnetic compass and the starter were later recovered by family members. The crankshaft was rotated and continuity was confirmed to all the cylinders. See enclosed engine manufacturer's report for details of the examination.

Continuity was established to all flight controls. The flap actuator was examined and found in the retracted position and the elevator trim was found in the neutral position.

The accident site was located 18 nautical miles from the point of departure. Examination of the aircraft and engine at the accident site did not disclose any mechanical problems or evidence of pre-impact malfunction.

MEDICAL AND PATHOLOGICAL INFORMATION

An Autopsy and toxicological tests were ordered and performed. The autopsies were performed by Dr. Steven T. Hayne, M.D., Deputy Coroner for the Rankin County Morgue, in Pearl, Mississippi, on September 2, 1996, as requested by the Mr. Terry Williams, Deputy Coroner for Morehouse Parish, Louisiana. Toxicological findings were negative.

ADDITIONAL DATA

The wreckage was released to the owner's representative at the accident site upon completion of the field portion of the investigation.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial	Age:	24, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine Land	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	Seatbelt
Instrument Rating(s):	None	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	Yes
Medical Certification:	Class 2 Valid Medical--no waivers/lim.	Last FAA Medical Exam:	09/14/1995
Occupational Pilot:		Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	680 hours (Total, all aircraft), 1 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Cessna	Registration:	N8380G
Model/Series:	150F 150F	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	No
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal; Utility	Serial Number:	15062480
Landing Gear Type:	Tricycle	Seats:	2
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	04/10/1996, Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	1600 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	39 Hours	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	4880 Hours	Engine Manufacturer:	Continental
ELT:	Installed, activated, did not aid in locating accident	Engine Model/Series:	O-200-A
Registered Owner:	JOHN EDWARD HAYS SR.	Rated Power:	100 hp
Operator:	JOHN EDWARD HAYS SR.	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Instrument Conditions	Condition of Light:	Night/Dark
Observation Facility, Elevation:	, 0 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	0 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	0000	Direction from Accident Site:	0°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Unknown / 0 ft agl	Visibility	0 Miles
Lowest Ceiling:	Obscured / 0 ft agl	Visibility (RVR):	0 ft
Wind Speed/Gusts:	3 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	40°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:		Temperature/Dew Point:	21°C / 21°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:			
Departure Point:	BASTROP, LA (2F8)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	GREENVILLE, MS (GLH)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	2055 CDT	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Wreckage and Impact Information

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

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC): HECTOR R CASANOVA **Report Date:** 04/29/1997

Additional Participating Persons: LAUREL W JOHNSON; BATON ROUGE, LA
JOHN T KENT; MOBILE, AL
LEAH D RIDDLE; WICHITA, KS

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](#).