



# National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Data Summary

<b>Location:</b>	GRAFORD, TX	<b>Accident Number:</b>	FTW98FA117
<b>Date &amp; Time:</b>	02/03/1998, 2138 CST	<b>Registration:</b>	N15566
<b>Aircraft:</b>	Piper PA-34-200	<b>Injuries:</b>	2 Fatal
<b>Flight Conducted Under:</b>	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

## Analysis

The airplane was dispatched to pick up a stranded flightcrew that landed at the destination airport, 70 miles from home base. Fog had formed in the area. The airplane circled the airport, above the fog layer, but was unable to land due to the fog. After circling the airport, the airplane was heard proceeding east bound until the sound of the engines disappeared. An ELT signal was received by another airplane on the 290 degree radial, 19 miles from the Milsap VOR. There were no reported eyewitnesses. The wreckage was located the next morning on the eastern ledge of a granite ridgeline of a north-south oriented hill rising approximately 200 feet above the surrounding terrain. The wreckage was scattered for 270 feet on a heading of 240 degrees. Signatures at the initial point of impact indicate that the airplane contacted trees and terrain in controlled flight in a slight left wing down attitude. Flight control continuity was established. The landing gear and flaps were found in the retracted position.

## Probable Cause

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The pilot's failure to maintain clearance with the ground. Factors were the dark night, the rising terrain, and the ground fog obscuring the ground.

## Findings

Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER  
Phase of Operation: CRUISE

### Findings

1. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - FOG
2. (F) LIGHT CONDITION - DARK NIGHT
3. (F) TERRAIN CONDITION - RISING
4. (C) CLEARANCE - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND

## Pilot Information

<b>Certificate:</b>	Private	<b>Age:</b>	63
<b>Airplane Rating(s):</b>	Multi-engine Land; Single-engine Land	<b>Instrument Rating(s):</b>	None
<b>Other Aircraft Rating(s):</b>	None	<b>Instructor Rating(s):</b>	None
<b>Flight Time:</b>	9000 hours (Total, all aircraft)		

## Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

<b>Aircraft Make:</b>	Piper	<b>Registration:</b>	N15566
<b>Model/Series:</b>	PA-34-200 PA-34-200	<b>Engines:</b>	2 Reciprocating
<b>Operator:</b>	FRED H. PATE	<b>Engine Manufacturer:</b>	Lycoming
<b>Operating Certificate(s) Held:</b>	None	<b>Engine Model/Series:</b>	IO-360-C1E6
<b>Flight Conducted Under:</b>	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

## Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

<b>Conditions at Accident Site:</b>	Visual Conditions	<b>Condition of Light:</b>	Night/Dark
<b>Observation Facility, Elevation:</b>	MWL, 972 ft msl	<b>Weather Information Source:</b>	Weather Observation Facility
<b>Lowest Ceiling:</b>	None / 0 ft agl	<b>Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:</b>	7 knots / , 360°
<b>Temperature:</b>	5°C	<b>Visibility</b>	10 Miles
<b>Precipitation and Obscuration:</b>			
<b>Departure Point:</b>	ARLINGTON, TX (F54)	<b>Destination:</b>	, TX (F35)

## Wreckage and Impact Information

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

## Administrative Information

<b>Investigator In Charge (IIC):</b>	HECTOR R CASANOVA	<b>Adopted Date:</b>	09/28/1999
<b>Investigation Docket:</b>	NTSB accident and incident docket 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 <a href="mailto:pubinq@ntsb.gov">pubinq@ntsb.gov</a> , or at 800-877-6799. Dockets released after this date are available at <a href="http://dms.nts.gov/pubdms/">http://dms.nts.gov/pubdms/</a> .		

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