



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Final Report

Location:	CALIFORNIA, MD	Accident Number:	BF093FA129
Date & Time:	07/01/1993, 0330 EDT	Registration:	N5291L
Aircraft:	PIPER PA-28-180	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Defining Event:		Injuries:	1 Fatal

Flight Conducted Under: Part 91: General Aviation - Personal

Analysis

THE PILOT TOOK OFF IN THE EARLY MORNING HOURS INTO MARGINAL VFR AND/OR IMC CONDITIONS. NO WEATHER BRIEFING, FLIGHT PLAN, OR RADIO COMMUNICATIONS WERE RECORDED BY ANY FAA FACILITY. THE AIRPLANE IMPACTED TREES LESS THAN 1 MI FROM THE AIRPORT, AND WAS FOUND 17 DAYS LATER. EXAMINATION OF THE AIRPLANE DID NOT REVEAL ANY PRE=IMPACT MECHANICAL MALFUNCTIONS. THE AIRPLANE WAS FLOWN BY OTHER PILOTS FOR ABOUT 6 HRS TOTAL TIME 1 DAY PRIOR TO THE ACCIDENT WITH NO SIGNIFICANT DISCREPANCIES NOTED. WITNESSES REPORTED THAT THE PILOT HAD AT LEAST 'ONE OR TWO' MIXED ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES BEFORE 2100. THE MEDICAL EXAMINER PERFORMED A TOXICOLOGICAL ANALYSIS ON A SPECIMEN OF MUSCLE TISSUE TO SCREEN FOR ALCOHOL - THE FINDING WAS NEGATIVE. WITNESS STATEMENTS INDICATE THAT THE PILOT HAD BEEN AWAKE FOR OVER 18 HRS.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: THE PILOT INITIATING VFR FLIGHT IN INSTRUMENT METEOROLOGICAL CONDITIONS. FACTORS WHICH CONTRIBUTED TO THE ACCIDENT WERE: THE PILOT'S FAILURE TO OBTAIN A WEATHER BRIEFING, HIS LACK OF SLEEP, AND THE EXISTING WEATHER CONDITIONS.

Findings

Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH OBJECT

Phase of Operation: CLIMB

Findings

1. (F) PREFLIGHT PLANNING/PREPARATION - INADEQUATE - PILOT IN COMMAND
2. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - LOW CEILING
3. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - FOG
4. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - OBSCURATION
5. (C) VFR FLIGHT INTO IMC - INITIATED - PILOT IN COMMAND
6. (F) FATIGUE(LACK OF SLEEP) - PILOT IN COMMAND
7. OBJECT - TREE(S)

Factual Information

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial	Age:	53, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Multi-engine Land; Single-engine Land	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	Seatbelt, Shoulder harness
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	Yes
Medical Certification:	Class 2 Valid Medical--w/ waivers/lim.	Last FAA Medical Exam:	11/19/1991
Occupational Pilot:		Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	7128 hours (Total, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	PIPER	Registration:	N5291L
Model/Series:	PA-28-180 PA-28-180	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	No
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	28-4592
Landing Gear Type:	Tricycle	Seats:	4
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	05/17/1993, 100 Hour	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	2500 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:		Engine Manufacturer:	LYCOMING
ELT:	Installed, not activated	Engine Model/Series:	O-360-A4A
Registered Owner:	FRANCIS G. BAKER	Rated Power:	180 hp
Operator:	AIRPARK SALES AND SERVICE, INC	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Instrument Conditions	Condition of Light:	Dawn
Observation Facility, Elevation:	NHK, 40 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	15 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	0555 EDT	Direction from Accident Site:	110°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Partial Obscuration / 600 ft agl	Visibility	2 Miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None / 0 ft agl	Visibility (RVR):	0 ft
Wind Speed/Gusts:	7 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	120°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	23° C / 15° C
Precipitation and Obscuration:			
Departure Point:		Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	HAMPTON ROADS, VA (PVG)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	0000	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Airport Information

Airport:	ST. MARY'S COUNTY (2W6)	Runway Surface Type:	Asphalt
Airport Elevation:	143 ft	Runway Surface Condition:	
Runway Used:	0	IFR Approach:	
Runway Length/Width:		VFR Approach/Landing:	

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):	Jeffrey B Guzzetti	Report Date:	09/27/1994
Additional Participating Persons:	W. OSBORNE; WASHINGTON, DC RAY TRENARY; PATUXENT RIVER, MD		
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/ .		

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), established in 1967, is an independent federal agency mandated by Congress through the Independent Safety Board Act of 1974 to investigate transportation accidents, determine the probable causes of the accidents, issue safety recommendations, study transportation safety issues, and evaluate the safety effectiveness of government agencies involved in transportation. The NTSB makes public its actions and decisions through accident reports, safety studies, special investigation reports, safety recommendations, and statistical reviews.

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](#).