



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Final Report

Location:	NAUBINWAY, MI	Accident Number:	CHI93LA301
Date & Time:	08/01/1993, 1635 EDT	Registration:	CFPTU
Aircraft:	CESSNA 180	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	1 Fatal, 1 Minor

Flight Conducted Under: Part 91: General Aviation - Personal

Analysis

THE PILOT WAS FLYING HIS FLOAT EQUIPPED AIRPLANE ALONG THE NORTHERN SHORE OF LAKE MICHIGAN. HE OBSERVED LOWERING CEILINGS AND FOG OVER THE LAKE, AND GAVE A PILOT REPORT TO A FSS OF CLEAR AIR OVER LAND. HE CONTINUED TOWARDS HIS DESTINATION AND FLEW INTO THE DETERIORATING WEATHER. THE PASSENGER STATED THAT THE PILOT ELECTED TO MAKE A PRECAUTIONARY LANDING IN THE LAKE BECAUSE OF THE REDUCED VISIBILITY AND LOW CEILING. SHE SAID THE WATER WAS ROUGH AND THE AIRPLANE LANDED HARD, DUG IN THE RIGHT FLOAT AND NOSED OVER. WITH THE PILOT'S ASSISTANCE, SHE WAS ABLE TO ESCAPE THE CABIN OF THE AIRPLANE THROUGH THE PASSENGER WINDOW AND SWIM TO THE SURFACE. SHE WENT BACK TO HELP THE PILOT (HER HUSBAND) BUT HE WAS STUCK HALF-WAY OUT THE WINDOW AND SHE COULD NOT FREE HIM.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: THE PILOT'S IMPROPER FLARE FOR LANDING. FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH THE ACCIDENT ARE THE LOW CLOUDS AND FOG, THE ROUGH WATER AT THE LANDING SITE, AND THE PILOT'S CONTINUED FLIGHT INTO KNOWN ADVERSE WEATHER.

Findings

Occurrence #1: HARD LANDING

Phase of Operation: LANDING - FLARE/TOUCHDOWN

Findings

1. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - LOW CEILING
2. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - FOG
3. (F) TERRAIN CONDITION - WATER,ROUGH
4. (F) FLIGHT INTO KNOWN ADVERSE WEATHER - CONTINUED - PILOT IN COMMAND
5. PRECAUTIONARY LANDING - PERFORMED - PILOT IN COMMAND
6. (C) FLARE - IMPROPER - PILOT IN COMMAND

Occurrence #2: NOSE OVER

Phase of Operation: LANDING - FLARE/TOUCHDOWN

Findings

7. TERRAIN CONDITION - WATER,ROUGH

Factual Information

On August 1, 1993, about 1635 eastern daylight time, a float equipped Cessna 180 airplane, Canadian registration CFPTU, sustained substantial damage during a precautionary landing in Lake Michigan, approximately one-half mile off shore from Naubinway, Michigan. The Canadian certificated pilot was fatally injured; his wife, the sole passenger, received minor injuries. The flight operated under 14 CFR Part 91, and departed Shawano, Wisconsin, about 1420 central daylight time. A VFR flight plan was filed.

According to statements made by the passenger, they had encountered deteriorating weather conditions while flying over Lake Michigan. They were flying in patchy to occasionally heavy fog, and her husband continued to fly lower to escape the fog. She said, in part, "With visibilities reducing we decided to land on the water near the shoreline. While landing the aircraft touched the water several times and then on the last touchdown it appeared to me that the right float dug into the water and then the aircraft cartwheeled... I am not sure of the height of the waves at the time except to say that when I surfaced the waves were washing over my head."

The passenger told a Michigan State Trooper who interviewed her on the day of the accident that the airplane came to rest upside down, suspended by its floats with the cabin submerged in water. She said she released her safety belt, but could not get her cabin door open; her husband reached over and opened her window. With the window open, she was able to swim out of the airplane and grab onto a float. She was able to look into the water and see her husband half out of the window. He appeared to be caught on something in the cabin. She grabbed him but was unsuccessful in removing him.

The passenger was rescued by a canoeist approximately four hours after the accident.

Prior to his departure from Shawano, the pilot filed a VFR flight plan with the Green Bay, Wisconsin, flight service station, and requested the current and forecast weather for his destination (Sault St. Marie). He was advised by the flight service station specialist that a thunderstorm was currently active at Sault St. Marie, and that visual meteorological conditions were forecast for the pilot's projected arrival time.

The pilot activated his VFR flight plan with the Green Bay flight service station at 1526, and reported to Green Bay at 1546: "would like to revise my en route altitude to three thousand five hundred feet, and I will stay very close inland 'cause there's storm activities in some sections of the lake...the inland is very clear in case other pilots inquire about the weather."

During the investigation, it was learned from the Canadian Transportation Safety Board that the airplane's front seat occupant's seat belt restraint system had been modified with an after market shoulder harness. A portion of the pilot's shoulder harness and lap belt was recovered from the airplane by the Macinac County Sheriff's office and sent to the NTSB. The lap belt/shoulder harness portion received was an incomplete length of lap belt webbing with the male half of the metal latching mechanism, and a portion of the shoulder harness webbing with a "V" shaped clip fastened at the end. The "V" clip was secured to the male seat belt latch via a raised button. The "V" clip was readily removed from the raised button with minimal force. No manufacturer's name was on any portion of the passenger restraint system received by the NTSB. Two different serial numbers were found on the latching plate, 500950-405, and 500950.

A conversation with the Macinac County Sheriff disclosed that the diver who had recovered the airplane found the seat belt portion of the restraint system unlatched, with the shoulder harness "V" clip still attached to the male latching mechanism. The diver reportedly told the sheriff that the male and female portions of the seat belt latching mechanism mated and demated without difficulty.

An autopsy was performed by Doctors Carl Hawkins and Stephen D. Cohle, Blodgett Medical Center, Grand rapids, Michigan. The cause of death is listed as "Asphyxia by drowning."

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Foreign; Private	Age:	60, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine Land; Single-engine Sea	Seat Occupied:	Left
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:	09/17/1992
Occupational Pilot:		Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	750 hours (Total, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	CESSNA	Registration:	CFPTU
Model/Series:	180 180	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	No
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal; Utility	Serial Number:	18051344
Landing Gear Type:	Float	Seats:	4
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	Unknown	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	2800 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:		Engine Manufacturer:	CONTINENTAL
ELT:	Installed	Engine Model/Series:	O-470R
Registered Owner:	YVON J. GENEUX	Rated Power:	230 hp
Operator:	YVON J. GENEUX	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Instrument 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:	Unknown / 0 ft agl	Visibility	1 Miles
Lowest Ceiling:	Unknown / 0 ft agl	Visibility (RVR):	0 ft
Wind Speed/Gusts:	/	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:		Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:		Temperature/Dew Point:	23° C
Precipitation and Obscuration:			
Departure Point:	SHAWANO, WI (3WO)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	VFR
Destination:	SAULT ST. MARIE, CD (YAM)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	1520 EDT	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Wreckage and Impact Information

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

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	JAMES D LA BELLE	Report Date:	08/17/1994
Additional Participating Persons:	WILL D ELLIOTT; GRAND RAPIDS, MI		
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](#).