



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Data Summary

Location:	CORDELE, GA	Accident Number:	ATL91FA047
Date & Time:	02/02/1991, 1914 EST	Registration:	N9209P
Aircraft:	PIPER PA-24-260	Injuries:	3 Fatal
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

Analysis

THE PILOT AND TWO PASSENGERS WERE FLYING TO AN AIRPORT TO PICK UP A FRIEND. NIGHT VMC PREVAILED. WITNESSES OBSERVED THE AIRPLANE FLYING AT ABOUT 300 FT AGL AT VARIOUS POSITIONS OVER THE CITY, VARYING HEADINGS, AND SOMETIMES CIRCLING. ONE WITNESS STATED THAT THE PILOT 'SEEMED LIKE HE DIDN'T KNOW WHERE HE WAS GOING.' THE AIRPLANE THEN PROCEEDED TOWARD THE MIDFIELD POINT OF THE AIRPORT ON A NORTHERLY HEADING. IT COLLIDED WITH PINE TREES, THEN FELL INTO THE ROOF OF A CHURCH LOCATED 150 FEET FARTHER NORTH. THE AIRCRAFT, AND CHURCH, WERE DESTROYED BY FIRE. THE FUEL SELECTOR VALVE WAS FOUND IN THE 'LEFT AUX' TANK POSITION; HOWEVER, AUX TANKS WERE TO BE USED IN LEVEL FLIGHT ONLY. ACTUATOR SETTINGS INDICATED THE GEAR WAS DOWN & THE FLAPS WERE UP. PROP SIGNATURES INDICATED PROP ROTATION IN A POWER PRODUCING MODE AT IMPACT. THE RUNWAY LIGHTS FOR RWY 9/27 WERE ON AT THE TIME, AND THE AIRCRAFT'S NORTHERLY HEADING WAS NOT ALIGNED WITH ANY RUNWAY. THE LOCATION OF THE AIRPORT DID NOT REQUIRE THE CITY TO BE OVERFLOWN.

Probable Cause

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: FAILURE OF THE PILOT TO ATTAIN PROPER RUNWAY ALIGNMENT AND TO MAINTAIN PROPER ALTITUDE. RELATED FACTORS WERE: DARKNESS AND THE PILOT BECOMING LOST/DISORIENTED.

Findings

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

Findings

1. (F) LIGHT CONDITION - DARK NIGHT
2. (F) BECAME LOST/DISORIENTED - INADVERTENT - PILOT IN COMMAND
3. (C) PROPER ALIGNMENT - NOT ATTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND
4. OBJECT - TREE(S)
5. (C) PROPER ALTITUDE - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND

Occurrence #2: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH OBJECT
Phase of Operation: DESCENT - UNCONTROLLED

Findings

6. OBJECT - BUILDING(NONRESIDENTIAL)

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	60
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine Land; Single-engine Sea	Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Instructor Rating(s):	
Flight Time:	775 hours (Total, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	PIPER	Registration:	N9209P
Model/Series:	PA-24-260 PA-24-260	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Operator:	CARTER, RICHARD C.	Engine Manufacturer:	LYCOMING
Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None	Engine Model/Series:	IO-540-D4A5
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual Conditions	Condition of Light:	Night/Dark
Observation Facility, Elevation:	ABY, 197 ft msl	Weather Information Source:	Weather Observation Facility
Lowest Ceiling:	None / 0 ft agl	Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:	6 knots / 1 knots, 10°
Temperature:	16° C	Visibility	15 Miles
Precipitation and Obscuration:			
Departure Point:	LOCUST GROVE, GA (GA04)	Destination:	

Airport Information

Airport:	CRISP-COUNTY CORDELE (02J)	Runway Surface Type:	Asphalt
Runway Used:	0	Runway Surface Condition:	Dry
Runway Length/Width:			

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Fatal	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Passenger Injuries:	2 Fatal	Aircraft Fire:	On-Ground
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	On-Ground
Latitude, Longitude:			

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC): Ralph E Hicks, Jr.

Adopted Date: 02/08/1993

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.