



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Data Summary

Location:	DEERFIELD, VA	Accident Number:	NYC99FA163
Date & Time:	07/01/1999, 1402 EDT	Registration:	N602RM
Aircraft:	Piper PA-31T	Injuries:	1 Fatal
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The pilot was descending the airplane from 23,000 feet for an instrument approach. All communications were normal until after he acknowledged an instruction to contact approach control, when radio contact was lost. Radar contact ceased at 11,300 feet due to radar signal reception difficulties. Contact was lost almost directly over the eventual impact site, which was on the eastern side of a small valley. Witnesses on the western side of the valley had seen the airplane flying near them, at treetop level, eastbound, and clear of clouds. About the same time, on the eastern side of the valley where the airplane would impact trees, then terrain, there was heavy rain. The commercial pilot had about 1,850 total flight hours, and had completed a 'Wings III' flight proficiency program and an instrument proficiency program about two months earlier. The airplane had been on a continuous maintenance program. At the accident site, all of the airplane's control surfaces were found, and the engines and propellers displayed signatures consistent with being under power at impact. There were insufficient remains to conduct an autopsy or toxicological testing. Previously, the pilot's father, two uncles, and a male cousin had suffered fatal heart attacks.

Probable Cause

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: Loss of control of the airplane due to pilot incapacitation following a heart attack.

Findings

Occurrence #1: LOSS OF CONTROL - IN FLIGHT
Phase of Operation: DESCENT

Findings

1. (C) AIRCRAFT CONTROL - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND
2. (C) INCAPACITATION(CARDIOVASCULAR) - PILOT IN COMMAND

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

Findings

3. OBJECT - TREE(S)

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial	Age:	61
Airplane Rating(s):	Multi-engine Land; Single-engine Land	Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Instructor Rating(s):	None
Flight Time:	1857 hours (Total, all aircraft), 24 hours (Total, this make and model), 25 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 7 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Piper	Registration:	N602RM
Model/Series:	PA-31T PA-31T	Engines:	2 Turbo Prop
Operator:	BRIAN HAWLEY	Engine Manufacturer:	P&W
Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None	Engine Model/Series:	PT6A-28
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Instrument Conditions	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	, 0 ft msl	Weather Information Source:	Witness
Lowest Ceiling:	Overcast / 0 ft agl	Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:	/ ,
Temperature:		Visibility	0 Miles
Precipitation and Obscuration:			
Departure Point:	JONESBORO, AR (JBR)	Destination:	WEYER'S CAVE, VA (SHD)

Airport Information

Airport:	SHENANDOAH VALLEY REGIONA (SHD)	Runway Surface Type:	
Runway Used:	0	Runway Surface Condition:	
Runway Length/Width:			

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
Latitude, Longitude:			

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC): PAUL R COX Adopted Date: 06/22/2000

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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