



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Final Report

Location:	TRACY, CA	Accident Number:	LAX00LA285
Date & Time:	08/01/2000, 1147 PDT	Registration:	N6737K
Aircraft:	Grumman G-164B	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Defining Event:		Injuries:	1 Fatal
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 137: Agricultural		

Analysis

The pilot made an abrupt course change while repositioning the airplane during an agricultural application flight. The pilot failed to maintain adequate clearance from a nearby 300-foot-tall transmission line, and a collision ensued. During the impact sequence, a portion of the airplane's right wing was severed. The airplane descended uncontrollably and caught on fire seconds after impacting the ground. Tetrahydrocannabinol carboxylic acid (marihuana) was detected at a level of 0.018 ug/ml in the pilot's blood, and it was also found in his urine.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The pilot's failure to maintain adequate clearance from obstacles while maneuvering during an aerial application flight.

Findings

Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH OBJECT
Phase of Operation: MANEUVERING - AERIAL APPLICATION

Findings

1. OBJECT - ELECTRICAL TOWER
2. (C) ALTITUDE/CLEARANCE - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND
3. WING - CUT/SEVERED
4. AIRCRAFT CONTROL - NOT POSSIBLE - PILOT IN COMMAND

Occurrence #2: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER
Phase of Operation: DESCENT - UNCONTROLLED

Factual Information

On August 1, 2000, about 1147 Pacific daylight time, a Grumman G-164B, N6737K, collided with an electrical tower approximately 5 miles north of Tracy, California. The airplane was destroyed in the collision sequence. The certificated commercial pilot, the sole occupant, received fatal injuries. Haley Flying Service, Inc., operated the airplane during the agricultural flight under the provisions of 14 CFR Part 137. The flight departed the Haley Flying Service private agricultural strip about 1143. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed and no flight plan had been filed.

Witnesses stated that the airplane was making a turn when it appeared to stall, roll to the right, and collide with the top of a 300-foot-tall electrical transmission tower. The airplane's right wing was partially severed. Thereafter, they observed the airplane continue traveling about 130 yards before finally impacting the ground in an inverted attitude in an adjacent agricultural field. A fire erupted about 10 seconds after the airplane came to rest, and it partially consumed the wreckage.

According to Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) personnel, when the pilot initiated the flight the airplane was carrying 60 gallons of fuel and 300 gallons of nonflammable pesticide. The FAA reported that according to the pilot's ground-based "flagger" (who was also a pilot), the spray application flight profile called for the pilot to execute his first pass on the east side of the crop. After commencing the flight in this direction, the pilot made an abrupt midcourse directional change, as though he had elected to spray from another direction first. According to the flagger, following the abrupt course change, the airplane was headed toward the transmission tower. The flagger additionally reported that the pilot then raised the nose of the airplane to clear the tower. The airplane appeared to stall just before the collision.

During the subsequent wreckage examination, a portion of the airframe was found lodged in the top of the electrical tower at the point of initial impact. A wing segment was found severed and lay near the tower's base. Two transmission lines were downed and lay strewn about the main wreckage area. Pacific Gas and Electric Company personnel reported that, at the time of the accident, the lines were energized with 230,000 volts of electricity.

The manager of the FAA's Toxicology and Accident Research Laboratory reported finding evidence of tetrahydrocannabinol carboxylic acid (marihuana) in the pilot's blood at a level of 0.018 ug/ml. It was also found in his urine.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial	Age:	55, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine Land; Single-engine Sea	Seat Occupied:	Front
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	Helicopter	Restraint Used:	Seatbelt, Shoulder harness
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	Yes
Medical Certification:	Class 2 With Waivers/Limitations	Last FAA Medical Exam:	03/31/1999
Occupational Pilot:		Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	03/31/1999
Flight Time:	25000 hours (Total, all aircraft), 20000 hours (Total, this make and model), 143 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 60 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 5 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Grumman	Registration:	N6737K
Model/Series:	G-164B G-164B	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	No
Airworthiness Certificate:	Utility	Serial Number:	454B
Landing Gear Type:	Tricycle	Seats:	2
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	07/28/2000, 100 Hour	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	4500 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	25 Hours	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	6650 Hours at time of accident	Engine Manufacturer:	Pratt & Whitney
ELT:	Not installed	Engine Model/Series:	R-1340
Registered Owner:	HALEY FLYING SERVICE, INC.	Rated Power:	600 hp
Operator:	HALEY FLYING SERVICE, INC.	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	
Operator Does Business As:		Operator Designator Code:	MBHG

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual Conditions	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	SCK, 30 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	14 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	1256 PDT	Direction from Accident Site:	160°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Visibility	10 Miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	4 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	Variable	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	29.86 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	37° C / 16° C
Precipitation and Obscuration:			
Departure Point:	TRACY, CA	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	TRACY, CA	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	1143 PDT	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Fatal	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Passenger Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Fire:	On-Ground
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 Fatal	Latitude, Longitude:	37.831944, -121.403056

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	ROBERT R CRISPIN	Report Date:	04/18/2003
Additional Participating Persons:	ROBERT M SMEDLY; FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION; OAKLAND, CA		
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 pubinquiry@ntsb.gov , or at 800-877-6799. Dockets released after this date are available at http://dms.nts.gov/pubdms/ .		

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