



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Final Report

Location:	GORHAM, NH	Accident Number:	NYC91FA001
Date & Time:	10/02/1990, 0450 EDT	Registration:	N98438
Aircraft:	CESSNA 172P	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Defining Event:		Injuries:	3 Fatal

Flight Conducted Under: Part 91: General Aviation - Ferry

Analysis

THE AIRPLANE WAS BEING FERRIED TO EUROPE & WAS ON A GREAT CIRCLE ROUTE AT NIGHT BETWEEN SYRACUSE, NY, & BANGOR, ME. THE PLANE WAS IN CRUISE FLIGHT AT 5500 FT MSL, WHEN IT STRUCK MT WASHINGTON. IT WAS EQUIPPED WITH AN AUTO PILOT & LORAN C. ACCORDING TO THE LORAN MFG, THE AIRPLANE WAS WITHIN 1/2 MILE OF COURSE & ON HEADING AT THE TIME OF THE ACCIDENT. THE TOP OF MT WASHINGTON WAS OBSCURED; HOWEVER, A WITNESS 7 MILES AWAY SAW THE LIGHTS OF THE AIRPLANE & A FIREBALL FROM THE IMPACT. THE PILOT HAD BEEN AWAKE FOR 22 HOURS, WHEN THE ACCIDENT OCCURRED.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: IMPROPER PLANNING/DECISION BY THE PILOT, AND HIS FAILURE TO MAINTAIN PROPER ALTITUDE WHILE FLYING OVER MOUNTAINOUS TERRAIN. FACTORS RELATED TO THE ACCIDENT WERE: DARKNESS, MOUNTAINOUS TERRAIN, AND PILOT FATIGUE.

Findings

Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER
Phase of Operation: CRUISE

Findings

1. (C) PLANNING/DECISION - IMPROPER - PILOT IN COMMAND
2. (F) LIGHT CONDITION - DARK NIGHT
3. (F) TERRAIN CONDITION - MOUNTAINOUS/HILLY
4. (C) PROPER ALTITUDE - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND
5. (F) FATIGUE - PILOT IN COMMAND

Factual Information

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial	Age:	33, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Multi-engine Land; Single-engine Land	Seat Occupied:	Unknown
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	Second Pilot Present:	
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	Yes
Medical Certification:	Class 1 Valid Medical--no waivers/lim.	Last FAA Medical Exam:	06/12/1990
Occupational Pilot:		Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	2100 hours (Total, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	CESSNA	Registration:	N98438
Model/Series:	172P 172P	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	No
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal; Utility	Serial Number:	17276292
Landing Gear Type:	Tricycle	Seats:	4
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	12/20/1989, Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	2400 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	0 Hours	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:		Engine Manufacturer:	LYCOMING
ELT:		Engine Model/Series:	O-320-D2J
Registered Owner:		Rated Power:	160 hp
Operator:	VAN BORTEL AIRCRAFT, INC	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual Conditions	Condition of Light:	Night/Dark
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	0 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:	-18°C / -18°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:			
Departure Point:	SYRACUSE, NY (SYR)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	BANGOR, ME (BGR)	Type of Clearance:	
Departure Time:	0330 EDT	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	2 Fatal	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Passenger Injuries:	1 Fatal	Aircraft Fire:	On-Ground
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	3 Fatal	Latitude, Longitude:	

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	ROBERT L HANCOCK	Report Date:	06/30/1992
Additional Participating Persons:			
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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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](#).