



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Final Report

Location:	RION, SC	Accident Number:	ATL85FA266
Date & Time:	09/01/1985, 1740 EDT	Registration:	N9340W
Aircraft:	PIPER PA-28-235-B	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Defining Event:		Injuries:	4 Fatal
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

Analysis

THE ACFT HAD BEEN CRUISING AT 10,500 FT FOR SEVERAL MIN AND THEN INFORMED ATC THAT THEY WERE CLIMBING TO 12,500 FT DUE TO VFR. SHORTLY THERE AFTER THE ACFT DISAPPEARED FROM THE RADAR SCOPE. WITNESSES HEARD THE ENGINE MAKING AN UNUSUAL SOUND AND LOOKED UP AND SAW THE ACFT FALLING FROM THE SKY AND PARTS FALLING FROM IT. ONE WITNESS CLAIMED TO HAVE SEEN THE ACFT COME OUT OF A CLOUD. A SQUALL LINE AND HEAVY RAIN WERE REPORTED IN THE AREA A SHORT TIME LATER BY PEOPLE IN THE LOCAL AREA.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be:

Findings

Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT ENCOUNTER WITH WEATHER
Phase of Operation: CRUISE - NORMAL

Findings

1. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - CLOUDS
 2. (C) IN-FLIGHT PLANNING/DECISION - POOR - PILOT IN COMMAND
 3. (C) JUDGMENT - POOR - PILOT IN COMMAND
 4. (F) IN-FLIGHT WEATHER ADVISORIES - NOT USED - PILOT IN COMMAND
-

Occurrence #2: LOSS OF CONTROL - IN FLIGHT
Phase of Operation: CRUISE - NORMAL

Findings

5. (C) AIRCRAFT HANDLING - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND
 6. SPATIAL DISORIENTATION - PILOT IN COMMAND
-

Occurrence #3: AIRFRAME/COMPONENT/SYSTEM FAILURE/MALFUNCTION
Phase of Operation: DESCENT - UNCONTROLLED

Findings

7. WING - OVERLOAD
 8. FLIGHT CONTROL,STABILATOR - OVERLOAD
 9. VERTICAL STABILIZER SURFACE - DISTORTED
-

Occurrence #4: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER
Phase of Operation: DESCENT - UNCONTROLLED

Factual Information

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	30, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine Land	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	Seatbelt
Instrument Rating(s):	None	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	Yes
Medical Certification:	Class 3 Valid Medical--no waivers/lim.	Last FAA Medical Exam:	
Occupational Pilot:		Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	125 hours (Total, all aircraft), 125 hours (Total, this make and model), 85 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 10 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	PIPER	Registration:	N9340W
Model/Series:	PA-28-235-B PA-28-235-	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	No
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	2811026
Landing Gear Type:	Tricycle	Seats:	4
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	11/09/1984, Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	2900 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	125 Hours	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	1892 Hours	Engine Manufacturer:	LYCOMING
ELT:	Installed, not activated	Engine Model/Series:	O-540-B4B5
Registered Owner:	DAL MAR AVN.	Rated Power:	235 hp
Operator:	DAL MAR AVN.	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Unknown	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	CAE, 236 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	16 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	1751 EDT	Direction from Accident Site:	185°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Scattered / 3500 ft agl	Visibility	15 Miles
Lowest Ceiling:	Broken / 10000 ft agl	Visibility (RVR):	0 ft
Wind Speed/Gusts:	10 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	130°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	28° C / 20° C
Precipitation and Obscuration:			
Departure Point:	DARLINGTON, SC (6J7)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	MUSCLE SHOALS, AL (MSL)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	1700 EDT	Type of Airspace:	Class E

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Fatal	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Passenger Injuries:	3 Fatal	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	4 Fatal	Latitude, Longitude:	

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	CHARLES T FOUTS	Report Date:	
Additional Participating Persons:	LEWIS W BALCKWELL PETER E PECK WAYNE GILES JOHN J WHITE		
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/ .		

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), established in 1967, is an independent federal agency mandated by Congress through the Independent Safety Board Act of 1974 to investigate transportation accidents, determine the probable causes of the accidents, issue safety recommendations, study transportation safety issues, and evaluate the safety effectiveness of government agencies involved in transportation. The NTSB makes public its actions and decisions through accident reports, safety studies, special investigation reports, safety recommendations, and statistical reviews.

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](#).