



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Final Report

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| Location: | ENGLEWOOD, CO | Accident Number: | DEN86FA034 |
| Date & Time: | 12/01/1985, 1808 MST | Registration: | N9250Y |
| Aircraft: | PIPER PA-31-350 | Aircraft Damage: | Substantial |
| Defining Event: | | Injuries: | 2 Serious, 1 Minor |
| Flight Conducted Under: | Part 91: General Aviation - Personal | | |

Analysis

THE PLT HAD BEEN FLYING APRX 7 HRS AND WAS COMPLETING THE FLT AT NIGHT WHEN THE ACCIDENT OCCURRED. HE WAS USING VISUAL CUES (THE ARPT ENVIROMENT) TO POSITION THE ACFT AT A PROPER ALT FOR A VISUAL APCH AND LANDING. THE TERRAIN SOUTH OF THE ARPT RISES SEVERAL HUNDRED FEET ABOVE THE ARPT ELEVATION. THE TERRAIN IS SPARSELY LIT. THE ACFT TOUCHED DOWN 2 MILES SHORT OF RWY 34R IN AN OPEN PASTURE AT AN ELEV OF APRX 400 FT HIGHER THAN THE ARPT. THE PLT HAD FLOWN APRX 1 HR OF NIGHT TIME IN THE LAST 90 DAYS, ACCORDING TO HIS LOGBOOK.

Probable Cause and Findings

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

Findings

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

Findings

1. (F) LIGHT CONDITION - DARK NIGHT
2. (C) BECAME LOST/DISORIENTED - INADVERTENT - PILOT IN COMMAND
3. (F) VISUAL/AURAL PERCEPTION - PILOT IN COMMAND
4. (F) FATIGUE - PILOT IN COMMAND
5. (F) LACK OF FAMILIARITY WITH GEOGRAPHIC AREA - PILOT IN COMMAND
6. (F) LACK OF RECENT EXPERIENCE IN TYPE OPERATION - PILOT IN COMMAND
7. (C) ALTITUDE - MISJUDGED - PILOT IN COMMAND
8. TERRAIN CONDITION - RISING
9. (C) CLEARANCE - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND

Factual Information

Pilot Information

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|----------------------------------|--|--|----------------------------|
| Certificate: | Private | Age: | 54, Male |
| Airplane Rating(s): | Multi-engine Land; Single-engine Land | Seat Occupied: | Left |
| Other Aircraft Rating(s): | None | Restraint Used: | Seatbelt, Shoulder harness |
| Instrument Rating(s): | Airplane | Second Pilot Present: | No |
| Instructor Rating(s): | None | Toxicology Performed: | No |
| Medical Certification: | Class 3 Valid Medical--w/ waivers/lim. | Last FAA Medical Exam: | 11/29/1984 |
| Occupational Pilot: | | Last Flight Review or Equivalent: | |
| Flight Time: | 1050 hours (Total, all aircraft), 212 hours (Total, this make and model), 701 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 40 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 7 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft) | | |

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

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|--------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Aircraft Make: | PIPER | Registration: | N9250Y |
| Model/Series: | PA-31-350 PA-31-350 | Aircraft Category: | Airplane |
| Year of Manufacture: | | Amateur Built: | No |
| Airworthiness Certificate: | Normal | Serial Number: | 31P8414029 |
| Landing Gear Type: | Retractable - Tricycle | Seats: | 7 |
| Date/Type of Last Inspection: | 06/21/1985, Annual | Certified Max Gross Wt.: | 7200 lbs |
| Time Since Last Inspection: | 78 Hours | Engines: | 2 Reciprocating |
| Airframe Total Time: | 296 Hours | Engine Manufacturer: | LYCOMING |
| ELT: | Installed, activated, did not aid in locating accident | Engine Model/Series: | LTIO-540-V2AD |
| Registered Owner: | ZILFI INVESTMENT CO. | Rated Power: | 350 hp |
| Operator: | ZILFI INVESTMENT CO. | Operating Certificate(s) Held: | None |

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

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|----------------------------------|-----------------------|---|------------------|
| Conditions at Accident Site: | Visual Conditions | Condition of Light: | Night/Dark |
| Observation Facility, Elevation: | APA, 5872 ft msl | Distance from Accident Site: | 2 Nautical Miles |
| Observation Time: | 1745 MST | Direction from Accident Site: | 350° |
| Lowest Cloud Condition: | Unknown / 1400 ft agl | Visibility | 3 Miles |
| Lowest Ceiling: | Broken / 1400 ft agl | Visibility (RVR): | 0 ft |
| Wind Speed/Gusts: | 8 knots / | Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual: | / |
| Wind Direction: | 50° | Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual: | / |
| Altimeter Setting: | 30 inches Hg | Temperature/Dew Point: | -17°C / -17°C |
| Precipitation and Obscuration: | | | |
| Departure Point: | EL PASO, TX (ELP) | Type of Flight Plan Filed: | IFR |
| Destination: | ENGLEWOOD, CO (APA) | Type of Clearance: | IFR |
| Departure Time: | 1500 MDT | Type of Airspace: | Class E |

Airport Information

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|----------------------|------------------|---------------------------|-------------|
| Airport: | CENTENNIAL (APA) | Runway Surface Type: | |
| Airport Elevation: | 0 ft | Runway Surface Condition: | |
| Runway Used: | 0 | IFR Approach: | None |
| Runway Length/Width: | | VFR Approach/Landing: | Straight-in |

Wreckage and Impact Information

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|---------------------|--------------------|----------------------|-------------|
| Crew Injuries: | 1 Minor | Aircraft Damage: | Substantial |
| Passenger Injuries: | 2 Serious | Aircraft Fire: | None |
| Ground Injuries: | N/A | Aircraft Explosion: | None |
| Total Injuries: | 2 Serious, 1 Minor | Latitude, Longitude: | |

Administrative Information

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|-----------------------------------|--|--------------|--|
| Investigator In Charge (IIC): | GREGORY A FEITH | Report Date: | |
| Additional Participating Persons: | LOUIS MONGER; BROOMFIELD, CO | | |
| 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 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. A factual report that may be admissible under 49 U.S.C. § 1154(b) is available [here](#).