



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Final Report

Location:	BRIDGEPORT, CA	Accident Number:	LAX94LA336
Date & Time:	07/19/1962, 2345 PDT	Registration:	N5069P
Aircraft:	PIPER PA24-180	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Defining Event:		Injuries:	4 Fatal
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

Analysis

ON JULY 19, 1962, A COMMERCIAL, NON-INSTRUMENT RATED PILOT, AND THREE PASSENGERS WERE CROSSING HIGH MOUNTAINOUS TERRAIN ON A NIGHT CROSS-COUNTRY FLIGHT. SUBSEQUENTLY, THE AIRPLANE COLLIDED WITH RISING TERRAIN AT ABOUT 9,200 FEET MEAN SEA LEVEL. WRECKAGE WAS FOUND ON A 30 DEGREE SLOPE WITH EXTENSIVE DAMAGE. THE AIRPLANE WAS REPORTED MISSING AND WENT UNDISCOVERED UNTIL AUGUST 8, 1994. THE AIRPLANE WITH HUMAN REMAINS WAS DISCOVERED IN A REMOTE AREA OF YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK BY TRAIL REPAIR PERSONNEL. THE FAA AND SAFETY BOARD DID NOT HAVE ANY RECORDS OF THE ACCIDENT FLIGHT. THE REGISTRATION NUMBER OF THE AIRPLANE HAD BEEN REASSIGNED TO ANOTHER AIRCRAFT IN 1972. U.S. PARK AND COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT PERSONNEL CONDUCTED A CORONER'S INVESTIGATION.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: IN-FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN FOR UNKNOWN REASON(S).

Findings

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

Findings

1. (C) REASON FOR OCCURRENCE UNDETERMINED
2. LIGHT CONDITION - NIGHT
3. TERRAIN CONDITION - MOUNTAINOUS/HILLY
4. TERRAIN CONDITION - HIGH TERRAIN

Factual Information

On July 19, 1962, about 2345 hours Pacific daylight time, a Piper PA24-180, N5069P, collided with mountainous terrain about 22 miles southwest of Bridgeport, California. The airplane was being operated as a visual flight rules (VFR) cross-country personal flight to Sacramento, California, when the accident occurred. The airplane, operated by Capitol Skypark Inc., Sacramento, California, was destroyed by impact and postimpact fire. The certificated commercial pilot and three passengers received fatal injuries. A VFR flight plan was not filed. The flight originated from Fresno, California, about 2300 hours.

A Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) operations inspector, Fresno Flight Standards District Office, reported that a U.S. Park Service trail crew from the Yosemite National Park discovered the airplane on August 8, 1994, in a remote section of the park about 9,200 feet mean sea level. The location is in the Stubblefield Canyon drainage, north of the Pacific Crest hiking trail, below the Macomb Ridge. The FAA and the National Transportation Safety Board do not have any records of the accident flight. The registration number of the airplane was retired and reassigned by the FAA to another aircraft in 1972.

A U.S. Park Service investigator reported that, during a coroner's investigation conducted jointly by the park service and Tuolumne County investigators, family members of the pilot and passengers provided details about the flight. See attached park service report.

The pilot held a commercial pilot certificate with an airplane single-engine land rating. The pilot also held an aircraft mechanic certificate with airframe and powerplant ratings. No record of the pilot's last medical certificate was retained by the FAA. No personal flight records were located for the pilot. No aircraft maintenance records for the airplane were located.

The recovered remains of the occupants were turned over to the Tuolumne County Coroner's Office, 28 N. Lower Sunset Dr., Sonora, California, by park ranger personnel.

The accident was located at latitude 38 degrees, 03.959 minutes north, and longitude 119 degrees, 35.674 minutes west.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial	Age:	26, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine Land	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	None	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Unknown Unknown	Last FAA Medical Exam:	
Occupational Pilot:		Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:			

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	PIPER	Registration:	N5069P
Model/Series:	PA24-180 PA24-180	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	No
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	24-75
Landing Gear Type:	Retractable - Tricycle	Seats:	4
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	Unknown	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	2550 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:		Engine Manufacturer:	LYCOMING
ELT:		Engine Model/Series:	O-360-A1A
Registered Owner:	ROBERT WATTS, SR.	Rated Power:	180 hp
Operator:	CAPITAL SKYPARK INC.	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Unknown	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:	
Precipitation and Obscuration:			
Departure Point:	FRESNO, CA (FAT)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	SACRAMENTO, CA (SAC)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	2300 PDT	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Fatal	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Passenger Injuries:	3 Fatal	Aircraft Fire:	On-Ground
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	Unknown
Total Injuries:	4 Fatal	Latitude, Longitude:	

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC): SCOTT R ERICKSON **Report Date:** 09/19/1996

Additional Participating Persons: JIM HENRY; FRESNO, CA
GREG P JABLONSKI; YOSEMITE, 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 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](#).