



# National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Data Summary

<b>Location:</b>	Tatum, NM	<b>Accident Number:</b>	FTW02FA195
<b>Date &amp; Time:</b>	07/01/2002, 1315 MDT	<b>Registration:</b>	N835K
<b>Aircraft:</b>	Beech H-18	<b>Injuries:</b>	1 Fatal
<b>Flight Conducted Under:</b>	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

## Analysis

A witness reported hearing the distinctive sound of a radial engine just before the crash, and right after that a loud crashing noise. The witness observed a large cloud of dust forming, subsequently saw the plane parts scattering from west to east across the pasture, and then observed the fuselage come to rest. A second witness saw the airplane hit the ground and a cloud of dust form about one-quarter of a mile long and as high as a highline wire. The witness said that after the dust settled he saw scattered plane parts, a highline wire down, and a wing part spilling fuel. The witness also stated that the airplane was traveling from west to east and looked horizontal at impact. At 12:59:57, approximately 10 minutes prior to the time of the accident, air traffic control radar identified a target 8 nautical miles northwest of the accident site at an altitude of 5,500 feet mean sea level (MSL). However, this target could not be positively identified as the accident airplane. A postmortem examination of the pilot by a Medical Investigator reported significant natural disease findings included coronary atherosclerosis (hardening and narrowing of the arteries), and chronic thyroiditis (inflammation of the thyroid gland). Both of these diseases can cause sudden cardiac problems including an arrhythmia or heart attack.

## Probable Cause

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be:  
The failure of the pilot to maintain clearance.

## Findings

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

### Findings

1. (C) CLEARANCE - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND

## Pilot Information

<b>Certificate:</b>	Commercial	<b>Age:</b>	68
<b>Airplane Rating(s):</b>	Multi-engine Land; Single-engine Land	<b>Instrument Rating(s):</b>	Airplane
<b>Other Aircraft Rating(s):</b>	None	<b>Instructor Rating(s):</b>	None
<b>Flight Time:</b>	30000 hours (Total, all aircraft), 500 hours (Total, this make and model), 30000 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft)		

## Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

<b>Aircraft Make:</b>	Beech	<b>Registration:</b>	N835K
<b>Model/Series:</b>	H-18	<b>Engines:</b>	2 Reciprocating
<b>Operator:</b>	James Ratliff Hurt	<b>Engine Manufacturer:</b>	Pratt & Whitney
<b>Operating Certificate(s) Held:</b>	None	<b>Engine Model/Series:</b>	R985 AN-1
<b>Flight Conducted Under:</b>	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

## Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

<b>Conditions at Accident Site:</b>	Visual Conditions	<b>Condition of Light:</b>	Day
<b>Observation Facility, Elevation:</b>	HOB, 3661 ft msl	<b>Weather Information Source:</b>	Weather Observation Facility
<b>Lowest Ceiling:</b>	None	<b>Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:</b>	15 knots / , 150°
<b>Temperature:</b>	33 °C	<b>Visibility</b>	15 Miles
<b>Precipitation and Obscuration:</b>			
<b>Departure Point:</b>	Taos, NM (SKX)	<b>Destination:</b>	Odessa, TX (ODO)

## Wreckage and Impact Information

<b>Crew Injuries:</b>	1 Fatal	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Destroyed
<b>Passenger Injuries:</b>	N/A	<b>Aircraft Fire:</b>	None
<b>Ground Injuries:</b>	N/A	<b>Aircraft Explosion:</b>	None
<b>Latitude, Longitude:</b>	33.441389, -103.604444		

## Administrative Information

<b>Investigator In Charge (IIC):</b>	Thomas M Little	<b>Adopted Date:</b>	11/25/2003
<b>Investigation Docket:</b>	NTSB accident and incident docket 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 <a href="mailto:pubinq@ntsb.gov">pubinq@ntsb.gov</a> , or at 800-877-6799. Dockets released after this date are available at <a href="http://dms.nts.gov/pubdms/">http://dms.nts.gov/pubdms/</a> .		

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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.