



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Factual Report

| | | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------|
| Location: | Hillsboro, AL | Accident Number: | ATL04CA146 |
| Date & Time: | 07/02/2004, 2005 CDT | Registration: | N9089L |
| Aircraft: | Air Tractor AT-402A | Aircraft Damage: | Substantial |
| Defining Event: | | Injuries: | 1 Minor |
| Flight Conducted Under: | Part 91: General Aviation - Business | | |

On July 2, 2004, at 2005 central daylight time, an Air Tractor AT-402-A agricultural airplane, N9089L, registered to and operated by a private individual, collided with a transmission wire while surveying a field in Hillsboro, Alabama. The local flight was conducted under Title 14 CFR Part 91, and visual flight rules. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed at the time of the accident and no flight plan was filed. The pilot received minor injuries and the airplane sustained substantial damage. The flight originated at Lawrence County Airport, Courtland, Alabama, on July 2, 2004 at 1930.

According to the pilot, the purpose of the flight was to survey a field he was to spray the following morning. The pilot stated that upon over-flying the field, the airplane collided with the top wire of a transmission tower that "was not visible to [him]." He stated that the airplane spun around 180 degrees to the left, the airplane "was out of control," collided with the ground, and came to rest inverted in a nearby field.

Examination of the wreckage site revealed the wreckage debris path extended across the field a distance of 75 feet leading up to the main wreckage site. The tower arm of the transmission tower, that was estimated to be 100 feet high, was bent, and the upper transmission wire was separated.

Examination of the wreckage revealed that the engine assembly separated from the engine mounts, and the propeller hub was separated from the crankshaft. The engine cowling and fuselage were crushed aft to the pilot compartment. The right wingtip was separated, and the leading edge of the right wing was crushed beginning about midspan outboard to the end of the wing. The left wing was partially separated at the root and completely separated approximately midspan. The left horizontal stabilizer leading edge was crushed aft. The pilot did not report a mechanical problem with the airplane during the flight.

Pilot Information

| | | | |
|----------------------------------|--|--|----------------------------|
| Certificate: | Commercial | Age: | 27, Male |
| Airplane Rating(s): | Multi-engine Land; Single-engine Land | Seat Occupied: | Single |
| 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 2 Valid Medical--no waivers/lim. | Last FAA Medical Exam: | 10/31/2003 |
| Occupational Pilot: | | Last Flight Review or Equivalent: | 02/10/2004 |
| Flight Time: | 3200 hours (Total, all aircraft), 100 hours (Total, this make and model), 100 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 50 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 7 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft) | | |

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

| | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Aircraft Make: | Air Tractor | Registration: | N9089L |
| Model/Series: | AT-402A | Aircraft Category: | Airplane |
| Year of Manufacture: | | Amateur Built: | No |
| Airworthiness Certificate: | Restricted; Normal | Serial Number: | 402A-1118 |
| Landing Gear Type: | Tailwheel | Seats: | 1 |
| Date/Type of Last Inspection: | 02/07/2004, 100 Hour | Certified Max Gross Wt.: | 7000 lbs |
| Time Since Last Inspection: | 98 Hours | Engines: | 1 Turbo Prop |
| Airframe Total Time: | 2029 Hours at time of accident | Engine Manufacturer: | Pratt & Whitney |
| ELT: | | Engine Model/Series: | PT6A |
| Registered Owner: | Buster Thornton | Rated Power: | 680 hp |
| Operator: | Buster Thornton | Operating Certificate(s) Held: | |

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

| | | | |
|----------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Conditions at Accident Site: | Visual Conditions | Condition of Light: | Dusk |
| Observation Facility, Elevation: | kdcu, 592 ft msl | Distance from Accident Site: | 12 Nautical Miles |
| Observation Time: | 1953 CDT | Direction from Accident Site: | 90° |
| Lowest Cloud Condition: | | Visibility | 10 Miles |
| Lowest Ceiling: | Overcast / 3600 ft agl | Visibility (RVR): | |
| Wind Speed/Gusts: | 6 knots / | Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual: | / |
| Wind Direction: | 180° | Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual: | / |
| Altimeter Setting: | 30.03 inches Hg | Temperature/Dew Point: | 26 °C / 23 °C |
| Precipitation and Obscuration: | | | |
| Departure Point: | Courtland, AL (9A4) | Type of Flight Plan Filed: | None |
| Destination: | | Type of Clearance: | None |
| Departure Time: | 1930 CDT | Type of Airspace: | Class G |

Airport Information

| | | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|---------|
| Airport: | Lawrence County Airport (9A4) | Runway Surface Type: | Unknown |
| Airport Elevation: | 588 ft | Runway Surface Condition: | Unknown |
| Runway Used: | NA | IFR Approach: | None |
| Runway Length/Width: | | VFR Approach/Landing: | None |

Wreckage and Impact Information

| | | | |
|---------------------|---------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Crew Injuries: | 1 Minor | Aircraft Damage: | Substantial |
| Passenger Injuries: | N/A | Aircraft Fire: | None |
| Ground Injuries: | N/A | Aircraft Explosion: | None |
| Total Injuries: | 1 Minor | Latitude, Longitude: | 34.633333, -87.200000 |

Administrative Information

| | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Investigator In Charge (IIC): | Philip Powell |
| Additional Participating Persons: | Barry Ponder; Birmingham FSDO |
| Note: | This accident report documents the factual circumstances of this accident as described to the NTSB. |
| 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/ . |