



# National Transportation Safety Board

## Aviation Accident Data Summary

<b>Location:</b>	Unknown, GM	<b>Accident Number:</b>	ERA11FAMS1
<b>Date &amp; Time:</b>	08/01/2011, 1033 CDT	<b>Registration:</b>	N4533R
<b>Aircraft:</b>	PIPER PA-28-140	<b>Injuries:</b>	1 Fatal
<b>Flight Conducted Under:</b>	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

### Analysis

The non-instrument-rated pilot arranged with a flight instructor to fly with him for the purpose of obtaining a flight review. Before the pilot's arrival at the airport, he phoned the operator's facility and requested that the fuel tanks be filled. The fuel tanks were filled as requested, and after his arrival at the operator's facility, he requested that the customer service representative take the flight instructor's name off the reservation and put his name on it because he did not want the flight instructor responsible in case anything were to occur. This comment was overheard by the flight instructor, prompting him to reassure the pilot that they would have a good flight. The pilot was given the book and keys for the airplane and went to it, started the engine, taxied out, and departed from runway 9 about 7:14 am without the flight instructor.

The flight instructor, who intended to fly with the pilot later, thought that the pilot was planning to execute several touch-and-go landings and takeoffs in advance of their lesson. When the pilot did not return, the instructor attempted to communicate with the pilot on a VHF frequency; however, the pilot did not respond. Uncorrelated radar data tracked the airplane from takeoff until it was lost from radar while over the Gulf of Mexico. The uncorrelated radar data indicates that after takeoff, the pilot proceeded northwest where he orbited several times, then proceeded south, flying over the Gulf of Mexico. The flight climbed to a maximum altitude of 13,100 feet mean sea level (msl), then descended to 10,900 feet msl, where 3-D modeling indicates the flight penetrated level 2 radar returns, which are known to have light to moderate turbulence, precipitation, updrafts and downdrafts. This was the last radar return from the airplane. About 3 hours 19 minutes after takeoff, the airplane was lost from radar; a search for the airplane was initiated by the U.S. Coast Guard; however, no wreckage, debris, or the pilot's body were ever located. The pilot did not contact an air traffic control facility at any time during the flight.

### Flight Events

Enroute-cruise - VFR encounter with IMC  
Enroute-cruise - Loss of control in flight  
Uncontrolled descent - Collision with terr/obj (non-CFIT)

### Probable Cause

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The non-instrumented rated pilot's flight into instrument meteorological conditions for undetermined reasons, resulting in an in-flight loss of control, uncontrolled descent, and collision with the water.

### Findings

Aircraft-Aircraft oper/perf/capability-Performance/control parameters-(general)-Not attained/maintained - C

Personnel issues-Action/decision-Info processing/decision-Decision making/judgment-Pilot - C  
Environmental issues-Conditions/weather/phenomena-Convective weather-Thunderstorm-  
Contributed to outcome - C

## Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	68
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine Land	Instrument Rating(s):	None
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Instructor Rating(s):	None
Flight Time:	1200 hours (Total, all aircraft)		

## Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Manufacturer:	PIPER	Registration:	N4533R
Model/Series:	PA-28-140	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Operator:	GULF AIR CENTER INC	Engine Manufacturer:	LYCOMING
Air Carrier Operating Certificate:	None	Engine Model/Series:	O-320 SERIES
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

## Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Observation Facility, Elevation:	BVE	Weather Information Source:	Weather Observation Facility
Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual Conditions	Lowest Ceiling:	None
Condition of Light:	Day	Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:	Calm
Temperature:	31 °C / 25 °C	Visibility	10 Miles
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Gulf Shores, AL (JKA)	Destination:	Unknown

## Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Fatal	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None

## Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Timothy W Monville	Adopted Date:	11/26/2012
Investigation Docket:	<a href="http://dms.nts.gov/pubdms/search/dockList.cfm?mKey=81383">http://dms.nts.gov/pubdms/search/dockList.cfm?mKey=81383</a>		

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