



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Data Summary

Location:	Pahokee, FL	Accident Number:	ERA13FA071
Date & Time:	12/01/2012, 1319 EDT	Registration:	N118GG
Aircraft:	GREEN GARY E THORP T-18	Injuries:	1 Fatal
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

Analysis

Family members reported the airplane overdue for arrival, so an alert notice was issued. The local authorities located the airplane the following day. Air traffic control records indicate that, during the accident flight, the pilot was operating under visual flight rules while receiving radar traffic advisory service from an air traffic controller. The air traffic controller noticed a potential conflict with a Boeing 757 and acted to maintain traffic separation by instructing the 757 pilot to maintain 8,000 feet, asking the accident pilot to maintain at or below 7,500 feet, and providing a wake turbulence cautionary advisory. The accident airplane was at 7,800 feet at the time, and the pilot advised that he was descending to comply with the controller's instructions. When the two aircraft were separated horizontally by about 1 to 2 miles, the accident pilot reported the 757 in sight. Radar data indicated that the accident airplane passed directly beneath the Boeing 757, within 500 feet of vertical separation, traveling in roughly the opposite direction. Although the geometry and the timing of the airplane's passing each other suggest the possibility of a wake turbulence encounter, the accident pilot made no comment about encountering turbulence. Although radar data showed the accident airplane turning left as if to get out from under the 757's flight track, it then turned back to the right and continued climbing on a northwesterly heading for about 2 1/2 minutes until reaching 8,300 feet. The airplane then turned right and descended to 7,200 feet before it was lost from radar. During the descent, the wings separated from the airplane due to overstress in a positive direction. The reason for the descent and in-flight overstress of the airplane could not be determined. The two aircraft were operating in class E airspace, and Federal Aviation Administration directives do not require 1,000-foot separation for aircraft in this airspace.

Flight Events

Enroute-descent - Unknown or undetermined
Enroute-descent - Part(s) separation from AC
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 descent and overstress of the airplane during the descent, which resulted in the in-flight breakup of the airplane.

Findings

Aircraft-Aircraft oper/perf/capability-Performance/control parameters-(general)-Attain/maintain not possible - C

Aircraft-Aircraft structures-Wing structure-Spar (on wing)-Capability exceeded - C

Personnel issues-Task performance-Use of equip/info-(general)-Pilot - C

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Airline Transport; Flight Engineer	Age:	80
Airplane Rating(s):	Multi-engine Land; Single-engine Land	Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Instructor Rating(s):	None
Flight Time:	(Estimated) 30000 hours (Total, all aircraft), 100 hours (Total, this make and model)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Manufacturer:	GREEN GARY E	Registration:	N118GG
Model/Series:	THORP T-18	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Operator:	David E Flatter	Engine Manufacturer:	LYCOMING
Air Carrier Operating Certificate:	None	Engine Model/Series:	O&VO-360 SER
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Observation Facility, Elevation:	PHK, 16 ft msl	Weather Information Source:	Weather Observation Facility
Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual Conditions	Lowest Ceiling:	Broken / 8000 ft agl
Condition of Light:	Day	Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:	9 knots/ 16 knots, 40°
Temperature:	23° C / 14° C	Visibility	10 Miles
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Pompano Beach, FL (PMP)	Destination:	Lakeland, FL (LAL)

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):	Eric Alleyne	Adopted Date:	05/08/2014
Investigation Docket:	http://dms.nts.gov/pubdms/search/dockList.cfm?mKey=85719		

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