



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Final Report

Location:	Jasper, AL	Accident Number:	ERA13FA101
Date & Time:	01/01/2013, 2240 CST	Registration:	N7700Y
Aircraft:	PIPER PA-30	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Defining Event:	Miscellaneous/other	Injuries:	3 Fatal
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

Analysis

According to the airport manager, who was also a flight instructor, the student pilot had completed 10 hours of dual instruction in a single-engine airplane and completed three supervised solos. After the student pilot's third supervised solo, he discontinued his training with the airport manager and enrolled in a flight program at a community college. The airport manager did not know if the student pilot continued with his training. A review of the student pilot's records revealed that he had no entries or endorsements related to multiengine, night, or instrument flights.

Instrument meteorological conditions existed on the night of the accident. An airport security video showed the accident airplane taxiing to the active runway. Shortly thereafter, the airplane's strobe lights can be seen reflecting off of the runway and then illuminating in the low clouds; the strobe lights then disappear from the camera's view. A witness in the area reported hearing an airplane flying low and then the sound of a loud crash. The witness subsequently contacted the local authorities, and the airplane was located 1 mile from the airport in a heavily wooded area. The airplane's owner reported that he had not given the student pilot permission to use the airplane. An examination of the airplane did not reveal any anomalies that would have precluded normal operation.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The student pilot's poor judgment to take a multiengine airplane for which he did not have experience or permission to operate and depart into night instrument meteorological conditions, which resulted in a loss of airplane control and impact with terrain.

Findings

Aircraft	Performance/control parameters - Not attained/maintained (Cause)
Personnel issues	Decision making/judgment - Student pilot (Cause) Qualification/certification - Student pilot (Cause) Stolen/unauthorized - Student pilot (Cause) Aircraft control - Student pilot (Cause)
Environmental issues	Low ceiling - Effect on personnel (Cause)

Factual Information

HISTORY OF FLIGHT

On January 1, 2013, about 2240 central standard time, a twin-engine Piper PA-30, N7700Y, collided with terrain during an uncontrolled descent in Jasper, Alabama. The student pilot and two passengers were fatally injured, and the airplane was destroyed. The airplane was unregistered and was owned by a private individual. The unauthorized flight was conducted in night, instrument meteorological conditions and no flight plan was filed. The flight departed from Walker County Airport-Bevill Field, Jasper, Alabama, at 2235.

Witnesses stated that, on the night of the accident, it was dark and raining. They heard an airplane flying very low and, shortly thereafter, they heard a loud crash. The witnesses called the local authorities and reported that the airplane had crashed.

According to the airport manager/instructor, the student pilot worked as a cleanup person at the airport in trade for flight lessons. The airport manager said that the student pilot completed 10 hours of dual instruction and a solo flight on April 27, 2012. He also said that the student pilot received his flight lessons in a Cessna C-172 airplane. The student pilot completed two other supervised solos before enrolling at the Wallace State Community College aviation program. He continued coming to the airport and doing odd jobs for various airplane owners in exchange for rides. The airport manager and had no knowledge of the student ever taking any other lessons.

The owner of the airplane stated that he knew the student pilot from seeing him around the airport. He went on to say that he never gave permission to the student pilot to fly his airplane. He said that the student pilot did not have a key for his airplane, and it was not kept locked. On the night of the accident, the owner was informed that his airplane was missing from the airport. When he arrived at the airport, he verified that his airplane was missing and reported that it was last seen on December 23, 2012.

According to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), the student pilot made no contact with air traffic control facilities prior to the accident, and there were no known radio transmissions.

PERSONNEL INFORMATION

The pilot, age 17, held a student pilot certificate and reported a total of 6 hours of flight time in the last 6 months as of the exam dated February 28, 2012. The student pilot was issued a class 3 medical certificate with limitations for corrective lenses. Review of FAA records did not reveal any other certifications other than the student pilot certificate. A review of copies of the student pilot's logbook revealed that he had accumulated total of 15.5 flight hours as of September 16, 2012. The logbook showed that, on April 27, 2012, he was signed off on his first solo flight. On August 26, 2012, he was signed off for the private pilot knowledge test, but there are no records of him taking the test. The student pilot's logbook did not show any entries or endorsements related to multi-engine, night, or instrument flights.

AIRCRAFT INFORMATION

The four-seat, low-wing airplane, serial number 30-785, was manufactured in 1965. It was powered by two Lycoming model IO-320-B1A 160-hp engines equipped with Hartzell HC-E2YL-2BS hubs and F7663-4 blades. Review of copies of maintenance logbook records showed

an annual inspection was completed August 13, 2012, at a recorded airframe total time of 1369.5 hours and a total time of 5160.6 hours.

METEOROLOGICAL INFORMATION

The recorded weather at the Walker County-Bevill Field, Jasper, Alabama (JFX) at an elevation of 483 feet, revealed at 2255, conditions were wind 350 degrees at 8 knots, cloud conditions broken at 400 feet above ground level, temperature 45 degrees Celsius (C); dew point 43 degrees C; altimeter 30.11 inches of mercury. A witness reported that there was fog and mist in the area at the time of the accident.

WRECKAGE AND IMPACT INFORMATION

The airplane was found in heavily wooded area about 1 mile southwest from JFX. The fuselage of the airplane came to rest on a course of 050 degrees magnetic. The cockpit and cabin were crushed and fragmented. The nose gear assembly was broken away from the fuselage and located along the debris path. The instrument panel and instruments were impact damaged. The empennage remained attached to the fuselage and was buckled. The vertical and horizontal stabilizers were still attached and buckled. The rudder and elevators remained attached to the flight surfaces at the attachment points, and the respective flight control cables were connected. The left and right aileron cables were broken in overstress, and the ends of the cables remained attached to their respective bellcranks. Flight control continuity was established from the flight controls to the flight control surfaces. The left and right fuel selectors were found in the on position.

The right wing was attached to the fuselage at the wing root, and the outboard section was fragmented throughout the debris path. The right engine was broken away from the wing nacelle and was impact damaged. The right main fuel tanks were breached, and the fuel caps were secured to the wing. The main landing gear assembly was broken away from the wing and was located on the debris path in the extended position.

The left wing was attached to the fuselage at the wing root, and the outboard section extending past the engine nacelle was fragmented throughout the debris path. The engine remained attached to the wing nacelle and was impact damaged. The left main fuel tanks were breached, and the fuel caps were secure. The left main landing gear was found in the extended position.

Examination of both engines revealed that the propellers remained attached to the hubs. Both propeller blade assemblies displayed "S" bending and scoring throughout the blade spans. There was evidence of propeller blade cuts on tree branches throughout the accident site. The branches measured approximately 4-inches in diameter and were found within the debris path severed cleanly in diagonal linear patterns. There were no discrepancies noted that would have precluded normal operation of both propeller blade assemblies. Both engines remained attached to their respective wings, and each showed crush damage. Examination of both engines did not reveal any anomalies that would have precluded normal operation.

MEDICAL AND PATHOLOGICAL INFORMATION

An autopsy was performed on the student pilot on January 3, 2013, by the Alabama Department of Forensic Sciences, Huntsville, Alabama. The autopsy findings included blunt force injuries, and the report listed the specific injuries. The cause of death was reported as three of the listed injuries.

Forensic toxicology was performed on specimens from the pilot by the FAA Bioaeronautical

Sciences Research Laboratory, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. The toxicology report stated no ethanol was detected in the liver or the muscle, and no drugs were detected in the liver.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

A review of video footage retrieved from the airport security camera showed that, on the night of the accident, an airplane is seen taxiing on the ramp at a high rate of speed to the active runway. As the airplane departs the strobes lights are seen reflecting off of the runway and continue up into a low cloud ceiling. The strobes are then seen pulsating in the clouds before being lost from the camera's view.

Title 14 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 61.89(a) states, in part, that a student pilot may not act as pilot in command of an aircraft that is carrying a passenger, or when the flight cannot be made with visual reference to the surface, or in any manner contrary to any limitations placed in the pilot's logbook by an authorized instructor.

History of Flight

Uncontrolled descent	Collision with terr/obj (non-CFIT) Miscellaneous/other (Defining event)
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Student Pilot Information

Certificate:	Student	Age:	17
Airplane Rating(s):	None	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	Seatbelt, Shoulder harness
Instrument Rating(s):	None	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	Yes
Medical Certification:	Class 3 With Waivers/Limitations	Last Medical Exam:	02/28/2012
Occupational Pilot:	No	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	(Estimated) 15 hours (Total, all aircraft), 0.1 hours (Total, this make and model)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Manufacturer:	PIPER	Registration:	N7700Y
Model/Series:	PA-30	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	No
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	30-785
Landing Gear Type:	Retractable - Tricycle	Seats:	4
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	08/13/2012, Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	3725 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	2 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	1370 Hours	Engine Manufacturer:	LYCOMING
ELT:	C91 installed, activated, did not aid in locating accident	Engine Model/Series:	IO-320 SERIES
Registered Owner:	Albert D. Whitworth	Rated Power:	150 hp
Operator:	On file	Air Carrier Operating Certificate:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Observation Facility, Elevation:	JFX, 483 ft msl	Observation Time:	1055 CST
Distance from Accident Site:	1 Nautical Miles	Condition of Light:	Night
Direction from Accident Site:	190°	Conditions at Accident Site:	Instrument Conditions
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Unknown	Temperature/Dew Point:	7°C / 6°C
Lowest Ceiling:	Broken / 400 ft agl	Visibility	
Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:	8 knots, 350°	Visibility (RVR):	
Altimeter Setting:	30.11 inches Hg	Visibility (RVV):	
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Jasper, AL (JFX)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	Jasper, AL (JFX)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	2235 CST	Type of Airspace:	

Airport Information

Airport:	Walker County Airport (JFX)	Runway Surface Type:	Asphalt
Airport Elevation:	483 ft	Runway Surface Condition:	Wet
Runway Used:	27	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:	5004 ft / 100 ft	VFR Approach/Landing:	None

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Fatal	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Passenger Injuries:	2 Fatal	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	3 Fatal		

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Eric Alleyne	Adopted Date:	04/07/2015
Additional Participating Persons:	Steven Blansett; FAA/FSDO; Birmingham, AL Greg H Muse; FAA/FSDO; Birmingham, AL Ronald Maynard; Piper Aircraft; Vero Beach, FL		
Publish Date:	04/07/2015		
Note:	The NTSB traveled to the scene of this accident.		
Investigation Docket:	http://dms.nts.gov/pubdms/search/dockList.cfm?mKey=85922		

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), established in 1967, is an independent federal agency mandated by Congress through the Independent Safety Board Act of 1974 to investigate transportation accidents, determine the probable causes of the accidents, issue safety recommendations, study transportation safety issues, and evaluate the safety effectiveness of government agencies involved in transportation. The NTSB makes public its actions and decisions through accident reports, safety studies, special investigation reports, safety recommendations, and statistical reviews.

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