



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Final Report

Location:	TEMPLE BAR, AZ	Accident Number:	LAX92FA058
Date & Time:	12/10/1991, 1642 MST	Registration:	N350MR
Aircraft:	PIPER PA31-350	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Defining Event:		Injuries:	5 Fatal

Flight Conducted Under: Part 135: Air Taxi & Commuter - Scheduled

Analysis

THE COMMUTER FLIGHT WAS ENROUTE TO ITS HOME AIRPORT AND OVER MOUNTAINOUS TERRAIN WHEN IT ENCOUNTERED LOW CEILINGS AND RAIN SHOWERS. THE AIRPLANE WAS NOT CERTIFICATED FOR IFR COMMUTER FLIGHTS. INSTEAD OF GOING TO AN ALTERNATE AIRPORT THE PILOT ATTEMPTED TO MAINTAIN VISUAL CONDITIONS AND REQUESTED AND RECEIVED A VISUAL CLEARANCE INTO THE TCA AND ADVISED THE CONTROLLER THAT HIS ALTITUDE WAS 5100 FEET MSL. HIS RADIO TRANSMISSION BECAME GARBLED DURING THE CLEARANCE READ BACK AND SHORTLY THEREAFTER THE CONTROLLER OBSERVED THE AIRPLANE'S RADAR TARGET TURN LEFT FROM ITS WESTERLY TRACK AND DISAPPEAR FROM HIS SCOPE. THERE WERE NO FURTHER COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN THE PILOT AND THE CONTROLLER. WHEN THE AIRCRAFT FAILED TO ARRIVE AT ITS DESTINATION AN ALNOT WAS ISSUED. EARLY THE NEXT MORNING THE AIRCRAFT'S WRECKAGE WAS FOUND IMPACTED IN A MOUNTAIN APPROXIMATELY 10 MILES SOUTH OF COURSE AT AN ELEVATION OF 4100 FEET MSL. THE INVESTIGATION REVEALED THAT THE PILOT HAD PREVIOUSLY AND SUCCESSFULLY FLOWN THE ACCIDENT AIRPLANE IN IFR CONDITIONS.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: THE PILOT-IN-COMMAND'S POOR INFLIGHT DECISION BY NOT ELECTING TO PROCEED TO AN ALTERNATE AIRPORT AND TO CONTINUE TO THE FLIGHT UNDER VISUAL FLIGHT RULES INTO INSTRUMENT METEOROLOGICAL CONDITIONS. THE LOW CEILINGS AND VISIBILITIES ACROSS THE FLIGHT ROUTE AND THE MOUNTAINOUS TERRAIN WERE FACTORS IN THE ACCIDENT.

Findings

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

Findings

1. (F) TERRAIN CONDITION - MOUNTAINOUS/HILLY
2. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - LOW CEILING
3. (C) IN-FLIGHT PLANNING/DECISION - POOR - PILOT IN COMMAND
4. (C) NOT PERFORMED - PILOT IN COMMAND
5. (C) VFR FLIGHT INTO IMC - ATTEMPTED - PILOT IN COMMAND

Factual Information

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Airline Transport	Age:	44, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Multi-engine Land; Single-engine Land	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	Seatbelt
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	Yes
Medical Certification:	Class 1 Valid Medical--no waivers/lim.	Last FAA Medical Exam:	10/16/1991
Occupational Pilot:		Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	2972 hours (Total, all aircraft), 654 hours (Total, this make and model), 205 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 37 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 2 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Manufacturer:	PIPER	Registration:	N350MR
Model/Series:	PA31-350 PA31-350	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	No
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	317652100
Landing Gear Type:	Retractable - Tricycle	Seats:	10
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	12/01/1991, AAIP	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	7000 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	13 Hours	Engines:	2 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	7433 Hours	Engine Manufacturer:	LYCOMING
ELT:	Installed, activated, aided in locating accident	Engine Model/Series:	TSIO-540-J2BD
Registered Owner:	FAIRCHILD FEDERAL CREDIT UNION	Rated Power:	300 hp
Operator:	LAS VEGAS AIRLINES, INC.	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	Commuter Air Carrier (135); On-demand Air Taxi (135)
Operator Does Business As:		Operator Designator Code:	LVAA

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Instrument Conditions	Condition of Light:	Night/Dark
Observation Facility, Elevation:	LAS, 2174 ft msl	Observation Time:	1650 MST
Distance from Accident Site:	26 Nautical Miles	Direction from Accident Site:	259°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Scattered / 3000 ft agl	Temperature/Dew Point:	11 °C / 7 °C
Lowest Ceiling:	Overcast / 6000 ft agl	Visibility	35 Miles
Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:	5 knots, 170°	Visibility (RVR):	0 ft
Altimeter Setting:	29 inches Hg	Visibility (RVV):	0 Miles
Precipitation and Obscuration:			
Departure Point:	GRAND CANYON, AZ (GCN)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	Unknown
Destination:	LAS VEGAS, NV (VGT)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	1601 MST	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Fatal	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Passenger Injuries:	4 Fatal	Aircraft Fire:	On-Ground
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	5 Fatal	Latitude, Longitude:	

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	James A Wall	Adopted Date:	04/23/1993
Additional Participating Persons:	ASI DALE NELSON; LAS VEGAS, NV GREG ERICKSON; WILLIAMSPORT, PA TIM HARDEE; OLATHE, KS		
Publish Date:			
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/ .		

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