



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Final Report

Location:	HILTON HEAD ISL, SC	Accident Number:	ATL88FA059
Date & Time:	12/10/1987, 2230 EST	Registration:	N777RC
Aircraft:	CESSNA 421A	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Defining Event:		Injuries:	2 Fatal
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

Analysis

ACFT DEPTED COASTAL ARPT AT NIGHT WITH 400 FT PARTIAL OBSCURATION IN PATCHY FOG. GROUND WITNESSES WHO HEARD ACFT DEPICTED A CIRCLING FLT PATH TO THE RIGHT AFTER TAKEOFF. ENG, PROP & TURBO TEARDOWNS DEMONSTRATED BOTH ENGS WERE OPERATING AT HIGH POWER & NO EVIDENCE WAS FOUND OF A PRE-IMPACT MALFUNCTION. ACFT NEVER APPEARED ON RADAR AND NO COMM WAS ATTEMPTED AFTER TAKEOFF. REVIEW OF PILOT RECORDS SHOWED ATYPICALLY LOW TOTAL INSTRUMENT FLT HOURS. PIC WAS CLEARED TO MAINTAIN RUNWAY HEADING AFTER TAKEOFF AND CLIMB TO 2000 FEET.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be:

Findings

Occurrence #1: LOSS OF CONTROL - IN FLIGHT
Phase of Operation: TAKEOFF - INITIAL CLIMB

Findings

1. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - FOG
2. (F) LIGHT CONDITION - DARK NIGHT
3. (C) CLIMB - NOT PERFORMED - PILOT IN COMMAND
4. (C) SPATIAL DISORIENTATION - PILOT IN COMMAND

Occurrence #2: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER
Phase of Operation: DESCENT - UNCONTROLLED

Factual Information

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial	Age:	65, 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:	Yes
Instructor Rating(s):	Airplane Multi-engine; Airplane Single-engine; Instrument Airplane	Toxicology Performed:	Yes
Medical Certification:	Class 2 Valid Medical--w/ waivers/lim.	Last FAA Medical Exam:	12/02/1987
Occupational Pilot:	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:		
Flight Time:	4970 hours (Total, all aircraft), 162 hours (Total, this make and model), 4851 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 79 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 33 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 2 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	CESSNA	Registration:	N777RC
Model/Series:	421A 421A	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	No
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	421A0149
Landing Gear Type:	Retractable - Tricycle	Seats:	6
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	07/06/1987, Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	6840 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	98 Hours	Engines:	2 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:		Engine Manufacturer:	CONTINENTAL
ELT:	Installed, activated, did not aid in locating accident	Engine Model/Series:	GTSIO-520-D
Registered Owner:	TENNESSEE WINGS, INC.	Rated Power:	375 hp
Operator:	TENNESSEE WINGS, INC.	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Instrument Conditions	Condition of Light:	Night/Dark
Observation Facility, Elevation:	49J, 20 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	1 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	2245 EST	Direction from Accident Site:	120°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Partial Obscuration / 400 ft agl	Visibility	1 Miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None / 0 ft agl	Visibility (RVR):	0 ft
Wind Speed/Gusts:	4 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	190°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	29 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	18° C / 18° C
Precipitation and Obscuration:			
Departure Point:	HILTON HEAD ISL, SC (49J)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	IFR
Destination:	COOKEVILLE, TN (CJE)	Type of Clearance:	IFR
Departure Time:	2221 EST	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Airport Information

Airport:	HILTON HEAD (49J)	Runway Surface Type:	Grass/turf
Airport Elevation:	20 ft	Runway Surface Condition:	Dry
Runway Used:	21	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:	4300 ft / 75 ft	VFR Approach/Landing:	None

Wreckage and Impact Information

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

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	PRESTON E HICKS	Report Date:	02/24/1989
Additional Participating Persons:	EDWIN GONZALES; PHOENIX, AZ JOEL VALLES; TORRENCE, CA DALE CARTER; ATLANTA, GA		
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 pubinquiry@ntsb.gov , or at 800-877-6799. Dockets released after this date are available at http://dms.nts.gov/pubdms/ .		

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The Independent Safety Board Act, as codified at 49 U.S.C. Section 1154(b), precludes the admission into evidence or use of any part of an NTSB report related to an incident or accident in a civil action for damages resulting from a matter mentioned in the report. A factual report that may be admissible under 49 U.S.C. § 1154(b) is available [here](#).