



AVIATION



HIGHWAY



MARINE



RAILROAD



PIPELINE

# Aviation Investigation Final Report

<b>Location:</b>	Old Bridge, New Jersey	<b>Accident Number:</b>	ERA23LA107
<b>Date &amp; Time:</b>	January 1, 2023, 19:30 Local	<b>Registration:</b>	N8282K
<b>Aircraft:</b>	Piper PA-32R-301T	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Substantial
<b>Defining Event:</b>	Controlled flight into terr/obj (CFIT)	<b>Injuries:</b>	1 None
<b>Flight Conducted Under:</b>	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

## Analysis

The purpose of the flight was for the pilot to stay in the airport traffic pattern and make two full-stop landings to meet night currency requirements. The pilot described that shortly after takeoff he encountered an unexpected indication while retracting the landing gear and that one of the navigation radios turned off and then back on again. He then extended the landing gear and subsequently noted no abnormal indication. He continued the in the traffic pattern and while on final approach to the runway noted that he was "low," had a clear view of the runway, and did not see any trees or other obstructions. He then increased engine power before he heard the sounds of (trees) striking the airplane. He could see the runway in front of him, so he landed the airplane and taxied uneventfully to his hangar. Both of the airplane's wings and horizontal stabilizers were substantially damaged. The pilot reported that there were no preaccident mechanical malfunctions or failures with the airplane 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 pilot's failure to maintain adequate clearance from trees during the landing approach.

## Findings

<b>Personnel issues</b>	Decision making/judgment - Pilot
<b>Aircraft</b>	Altitude - Not attained/maintained

## Factual Information

### History of Flight

<b>Approach-VFR pattern final</b>	Controlled flight into terr/obj (CFIT) (Defining event)
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### Pilot Information

<b>Certificate:</b>	Private	<b>Age:</b>	55, Male
<b>Airplane Rating(s):</b>	Single-engine land	<b>Seat Occupied:</b>	Front
<b>Other Aircraft Rating(s):</b>	None	<b>Restraint Used:</b>	3-point
<b>Instrument Rating(s):</b>	Airplane	<b>Second Pilot Present:</b>	No
<b>Instructor Rating(s):</b>	None	<b>Toxicology Performed:</b>	
<b>Medical Certification:</b>	Class 3 Without waivers/limitations	<b>Last FAA Medical Exam:</b>	December 11, 2021
<b>Occupational Pilot:</b>	No	<b>Last Flight Review or Equivalent:</b>	May 19, 2022
<b>Flight Time:</b>	483 hours (Total, all aircraft), 154 hours (Total, this make and model), 316 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 7 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 6 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft)		

### Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

<b>Aircraft Make:</b>	Piper	<b>Registration:</b>	N8282K
<b>Model/Series:</b>	PA-32R-301T	<b>Aircraft Category:</b>	Airplane
<b>Year of Manufacture:</b>	1981	<b>Amateur Built:</b>	
<b>Airworthiness Certificate:</b>	Normal	<b>Serial Number:</b>	32R-8129002
<b>Landing Gear Type:</b>	Retractable - Tricycle	<b>Seats:</b>	6
<b>Date/Type of Last Inspection:</b>	May 23, 2022 Annual	<b>Certified Max Gross Wt.:</b>	3617 lbs
<b>Time Since Last Inspection:</b>	18 Hrs	<b>Engines:</b>	1 Reciprocating
<b>Airframe Total Time:</b>	3790 Hrs at time of accident	<b>Engine Manufacturer:</b>	Lycoming
<b>ELT:</b>	Installed, not activated	<b>Engine Model/Series:</b>	TIO-540-S1AD
<b>Registered Owner:</b>	On file	<b>Rated Power:</b>	300 Horsepower
<b>Operator:</b>	On file	<b>Operating Certificate(s) Held:</b>	None

## Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

<b>Conditions at Accident Site:</b>	Visual (VMC)	<b>Condition of Light:</b>	Night/dark
<b>Observation Facility, Elevation:</b>	BLM,159 ft msl	<b>Distance from Accident Site:</b>	13 Nautical Miles
<b>Observation Time:</b>	18:56 Local	<b>Direction from Accident Site:</b>	131°
<b>Lowest Cloud Condition:</b>	Scattered / 8000 ft AGL	<b>Visibility</b>	10 miles
<b>Lowest Ceiling:</b>		<b>Visibility (RVR):</b>	
<b>Wind Speed/Gusts:</b>	6 knots /	<b>Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:</b>	None / None
<b>Wind Direction:</b>	250°	<b>Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:</b>	N/A / N/A
<b>Altimeter Setting:</b>	30.04 inches Hg	<b>Temperature/Dew Point:</b>	8°C / 5°C
<b>Precipitation and Obscuration:</b>	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
<b>Departure Point:</b>	Old Bridge, NJ	<b>Type of Flight Plan Filed:</b>	None
<b>Destination:</b>	Old Bridge, NJ	<b>Type of Clearance:</b>	None
<b>Departure Time:</b>		<b>Type of Airspace:</b>	Class E

## Airport Information

<b>Airport:</b>	OLD BRIDGE 3N6	<b>Runway Surface Type:</b>	Asphalt
<b>Airport Elevation:</b>	87 ft msl	<b>Runway Surface Condition:</b>	Dry
<b>Runway Used:</b>	24	<b>IFR Approach:</b>	None
<b>Runway Length/Width:</b>	3594 ft / 50 ft	<b>VFR Approach/Landing:</b>	Full stop;Traffic pattern

## Wreckage and Impact Information

<b>Crew Injuries:</b>	1 None	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Substantial
<b>Passenger Injuries:</b>	N/A	<b>Aircraft Fire:</b>	None
<b>Ground Injuries:</b>	N/A	<b>Aircraft Explosion:</b>	None
<b>Total Injuries:</b>	1 None	<b>Latitude, Longitude:</b>	40.333721,-74.342052(est)

## Administrative Information

<b>Investigator In Charge (IIC):</b>	Wentz, Peter
<b>Additional Participating Persons:</b>	Watson Joseph ; FAA/FSDO; Teterboro, NJ
<b>Original Publish Date:</b>	June 15, 2023
<b>Last Revision Date:</b>	
<b>Investigation Class:</b>	<a href="#">Class 4</a>
<b>Note:</b>	The NTSB did not travel to the scene of this accident.
<b>Investigation Docket:</b>	<a href="https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=106560">https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=106560</a>

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) is an independent federal agency charged by Congress with investigating every civil aviation accident in the United States and significant events in other modes of transportation—railroad, transit, highway, marine, pipeline, and commercial space. We determine the probable causes of the accidents and events we investigate, and issue safety recommendations aimed at preventing future occurrences. In addition, we conduct transportation safety research studies and offer information and other assistance to family members and survivors for each accident or event we investigate. We also serve as the appellate authority for enforcement actions involving aviation and mariner certificates issued by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and US Coast Guard, and we adjudicate appeals of civil penalty actions taken by the FAA.

The NTSB does not assign fault or blame for an accident or incident; rather, as specified by NTSB regulation, “accident/incident investigations are fact-finding proceedings with no formal issues and no adverse parties ... and are not conducted for the purpose of determining the rights or liabilities of any person” (Title 49 *Code of Federal Regulations* section 831.4). Assignment of fault or legal liability is not relevant to the NTSB’s statutory mission to improve transportation safety by investigating accidents and incidents and issuing safety recommendations. In addition, statutory language prohibits the admission into evidence or use of any part of an NTSB report related to an accident in a civil action for damages resulting from a matter mentioned in the report (Title 49 *United States Code* section 1154(b)). A factual report that may be admissible under 49 *United States Code* section 1154(b) is available [here](#).