



## **NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD**

Office of Aviation Safety  
Washington, D.C. 20594

January 28, 2022

### **Specialist's Factual Report**

## **AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL**

CEN20LA118

## **A. ACCIDENT**

Location: Rensselaer, Indiana  
Date: March 11, 2020  
Time: 0636 central daylight time (CDT)<sup>1</sup>  
1136 coordinated universal time (UTC)  
Airplane: Piper PA-32R, N599ST

## **B. AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL SPECIALIST**

Specialist Brian Soper  
National Transportation Safety Board  
Washington, DC

## **C. SUMMARY**

On March 11, 2020, about 0636 central daylight time, a Piper PA-32R airplane, N599ST, was substantially damaged when it was involved in an accident near Jasper County Airport (RZL), Rensselaer, Indiana. The pilot, sole occupant, was seriously injured. The airplane was operated as a Title 14 *Code of Federal Regulations* Part 91 personal cross-country flight.

## **D. DETAILS OF THE INVESTIGATION**

The air traffic control (ATC) specialist did not travel in support of this investigation and all work was conducted from the home office. ATC services were provided by Chicago Air Route Traffic Control Center (ZAU ARTCC), surveillance and audio data were provided by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and used to produce the graphics and transcript associated with this report.

## **E. FACTUAL INFORMATION**

### **1.0 Flight Track Surveillance Information**

The airplane was equipped with a transponder and was transmitting a discrete beacon code of 5354 as assigned by ATC. The airplane was Automatic Dependent Surveillance-Broadcast (ADS-B) equipped and transmitting.

### **1.1 Automatic Dependent Surveillance - Broadcast**

ADS-B is a surveillance system in which an aircraft or vehicle to be detected is fitted with cooperative equipment in the form of a data link transmitter. The aircraft or vehicle periodically broadcasts its GPS-derived position and other information such

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<sup>1</sup> All times are in central daylight time (CDT) unless otherwise indicated.

as velocity over the data link, which is received by a ground-based transceiver for processing and display at an air traffic control facility.

ADS-B data was also provided by the FAA<sup>2</sup>. The ADS-B data was of good quality and were used in producing the flight track graphics in this report.

## **2.0 History of Flight**

The following timeline was produced using the certified data provided by the FAA. Times are rounded to the nearest minute, and altitudes are indicated in feet above mean sea level (msl) unless otherwise indicated<sup>3</sup>.

- 0607 The pilot of N599ST first contacted the ZAU ARTCC Sector 51 Radar (R51) controller and reported he was at 1,000 feet and climbing to 5,000 feet.
- 0609 The R51 controller advised the pilot of N599ST that he was radar contact seven miles south of the Boiler VORTAC<sup>4</sup> leaving 2,000 feet.
- 0612 The R51 controller instructed the pilot of N599ST to advise when he had the weather, NOTAMs<sup>5</sup>, and what type of approach he was requesting into the RZL airport.
- The pilot requested the RNAV runway (RWY) 18 approach into RZL.
- The R51 controller cleared N599ST to JITVI<sup>6</sup>. The pilot acknowledged.
- 0621 The R51 controller instructed the pilot of N599ST to cross JITVI [incorrectly spoken as JITIV] at 3,000 feet and cleared him for the RNAV (GPS) RWY 18 approach to RZL. The pilot acknowledged with a correct readback [using the correct pronunciation of JITVI].
- 0622 The R51 controller instructed the pilot of N599ST to report commencing the approach. The pilot acknowledged.
- 0627 The R51 controller advised the pilot of N599ST that he could change to advisory frequency, and to report his landing time to flight service. The pilot acknowledged.

There were no further recorded transmissions from N599ST.

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<sup>2</sup> ADS-B source data is included in Attachment 1: ADS-B Data.

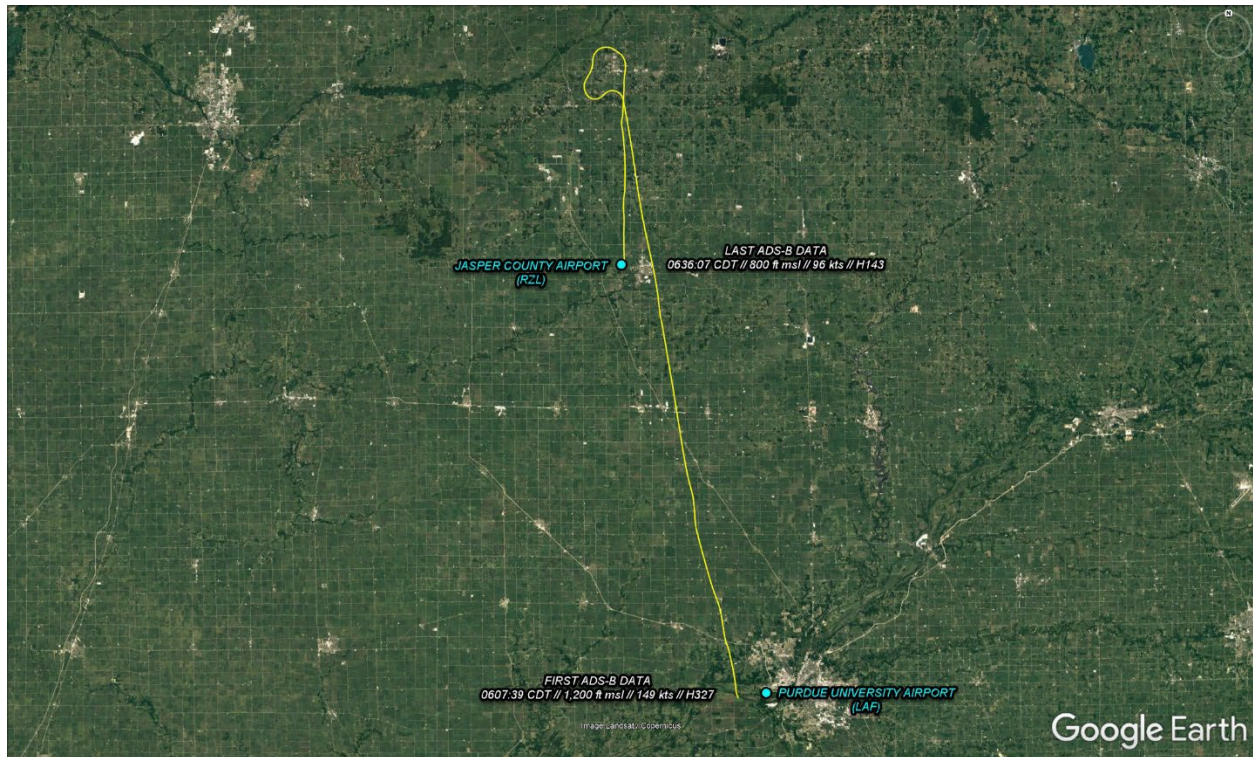
<sup>3</sup> A partial transcript of pilot-controller communications is included in Attachment 2: ATC Audio Transcript - Partial.

<sup>4</sup> VORTAC - A navigation aid providing VOR azimuth, TACAN azimuth, and TACAN distance measuring equipment (DME) at one site.

<sup>5</sup> NOTAM - Notice to Airman. A notice containing information concerning the establishment, condition, or change in any component of the National Airspace System which timely knowledge is essential to personnel concerned with flight operations.

<sup>6</sup> JITVI is the initial approach fix (IAF) for the RNAV (GPS) RWY 18 approach to RZL.

### 3.0 Flight Track Graphics



**Figure 1.** Overview of accident flight track overlaid on satellite imagery.



**Figure 2.** Final segment of accident flight track overlaid on satellite imagery (profile view).



**Figure 3.** Final segment of accident flight track overlaid on satellite imagery - with time, altitude, ground speed, and heading information indicated.

## F. LIST OF ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1: ADS-B Data
- Attachment 2: ATC Audio Transcript - Partial
- Attachment 3: Flight Track Graphics
- Attachment 4: ATC Audio - Sector 51 Radar (R51) Controller

Submitted by:

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