

N9673W Narrative

At approximately 16:13 EDT on January 27, Aircraft N9673W, a Piper PA-28-140, S/N 28-23137, Piloted by Philip F. Cianciolo crashed in an area behind 835 Hanover Rd. in Meriden, CT. There were two persons onboard, Mr. Cianciolo and Beverly Weintraub, both were certificated pilots. Both persons sustained serious injuries and were transported to Yale New Haven hospital.

The flight was conducted under 14 CFR part 91 and was from Oxford Airport, ME (81B) to Meriden Markham Airport (MMK). Weather was visual meteorological conditions, and was not a factor.

On scene investigation revealed that the aircraft impacted a chain link fence and slid down an embankment and came to rest at a forty five degree angle on its engine cowling and both main gear on a heading of 245 degrees. All major components of the aircraft were accounted for at the scene.

Inspection of the aircraft found the following: The nose gear snapped off on initial impact and was found under the aircraft. Both propeller blades were slightly bent from impact and upper and lower cowlings were damaged. The right side firewall was wrinkled and the right lower engine mount was bent. The right wing top skin was wrinkled and buckled and the leading edge was torn open just outboard of the fuel tank. The left wing top skin two feet from the wing tip was wrinkled and the fiberglass wing tip was torn open. The right windshield was broken and dislodged and the fuselage was buckled just above the left wing root. The flaps were in the full up position. The throttle was fully retarded and the mixture was full rich. The fuel selector was on the left tank.

The aircraft was brought to a level attitude and both left and right wing fuel caps were removed and no fuel was noted in either tank. Personnel who were removing both wings during the salvage operation stated that approximately one half gallon of fuel was removed from both wings.

The pilot stated the following: Prior to leaving Oxford Airport he visually checked both tanks and confirmed that the fuel levels were at the tabs. This would give him 18 gallons per side remaining for a total of 36 gallons. He used AOPA flight planer to calculate the 218 mile trip with a fuel burn of 8 gallons per hour, an air speed of 103 knots, and a head wind of 37 knots. These calculation results would require 28 gallons of fuel with a ground speed of 69 MPH for a total flight time of 3:09 hours leaving them 6 gallons of reserve. He took off from 81B at approximately 13:30 and climb to an altitude 4500'. He elected to use all the fuel in the right tank first which ran dry just past Worcester approximately 150 miles into the trip where he switched to the left tank for the remainder of the trip. He descended altitude several times looking for less headwind but maintained a ground speed of 68-73 knots throughout the entire trip. Just north east of Hartford Brainard (HFD) he noticed the left fuel quantity needle bouncing below the 10 gallon mark, but was confident in his calculations and elected not to stop at HFD for fuel. At 2.5 miles out from MMK the fuel pressure gage faltered and it became clear they would not make the runway. They setup for best glide speed and prepared the aircraft for an emergency landing. At 16:13 they impacted the chain link fence.