



NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

Office of Aviation Safety
Washington, D.C. 20594

October 24, 2021

Specialist's Factual Report

AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL

ERA21LA111

A. ACCIDENT

Location: Boynton Beach, Florida
Date: January 24, 2021
Time: 2001 eastern standard time (EST)
0101 coordinated universal time (UTC)
Airplane: N266ND, Piper PA-28-161

B. AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL SPECIALIST

Specialist Brian Soper
National Transportation Safety Board
Washington, DC 20594

C. SUMMARY

On January 24, 2021, about 2000 eastern standard time, a Piper PA-28-161, N266ND, operated by 2Fly Airborne, was destroyed by collision with the Atlantic Ocean during a controlled descent near Boynton Beach, Florida. The private pilot was fatally injured. Night visual meteorological conditions prevailed, and no flight plan was filed for the flight which departed Palm Beach County Park Airport (LNA), West Palm Beach, Florida, about 1955 and destined for Merritt Island Airport (COI), Merritt Island, Florida. The personal flight was conducted under the provisions of Title 14 *Code of Federal Regulations* Part 91.

D. DETAILS OF THE INVESTIGATION

Air traffic control (ATC) services were provided by Palm Beach International Airport (PBI) Airport Traffic Control Tower (ATCT). The ATC investigator did not travel or conduct interviews in support of this accident investigation. The ATC audio recordings¹ (Attachment 1) and ADS-B² data (Attachment 2) used to produce this report were provided by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).

E. FACTUAL INFORMATION

1.0 History of Flight

The following timeline was produced using the data provided by the FAA (see attachments 1 and 2). Times are EST and rounded to the nearest minute, and altitudes are indicated in feet above mean sea level (msl).

0057 The pilot of N266ND first contacted PBI ATCT and was instructed by the PBI ATCT arrival radar (AR) controller to squawk 0212.

¹ A transcript of the ATC audio recordings provided by the FAA are provided in Attachment 1.

² ADS-B – Automatic Dependent Surveillance-Broadcast - 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 as velocity over the data link, which is received by a ground-based transmitter/receiver (transceiver) for processing and display at an air traffic control facility.

0058 The AR controller advised the pilot of N266ND that they were radar contact two miles south of LNA airport and asked for their intentions; the pilot stated they wanted VFR flight following to COI and would like to fly along the shoreline.

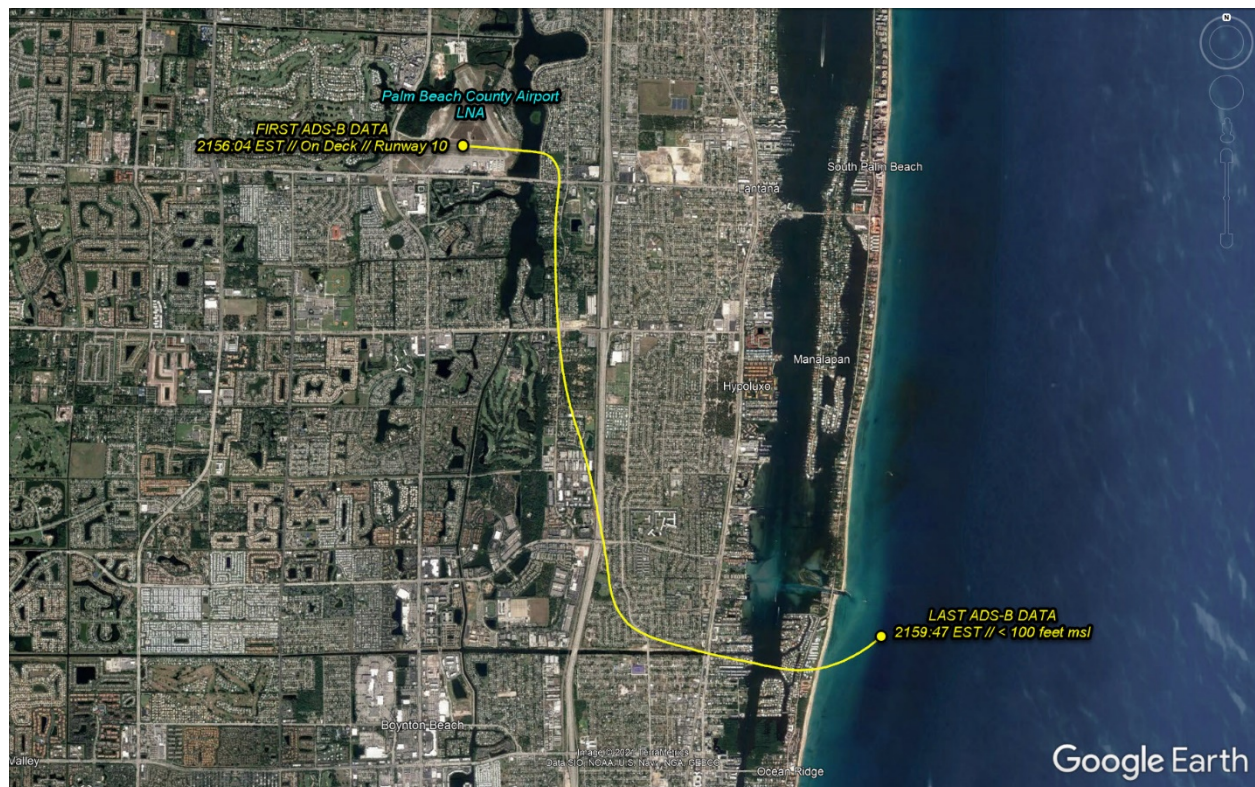
The AR controller instructed the pilot of N266ND to proceed offshore and follow the shoreline northbound at or below 500 feet and that the altimeter was 30.11.

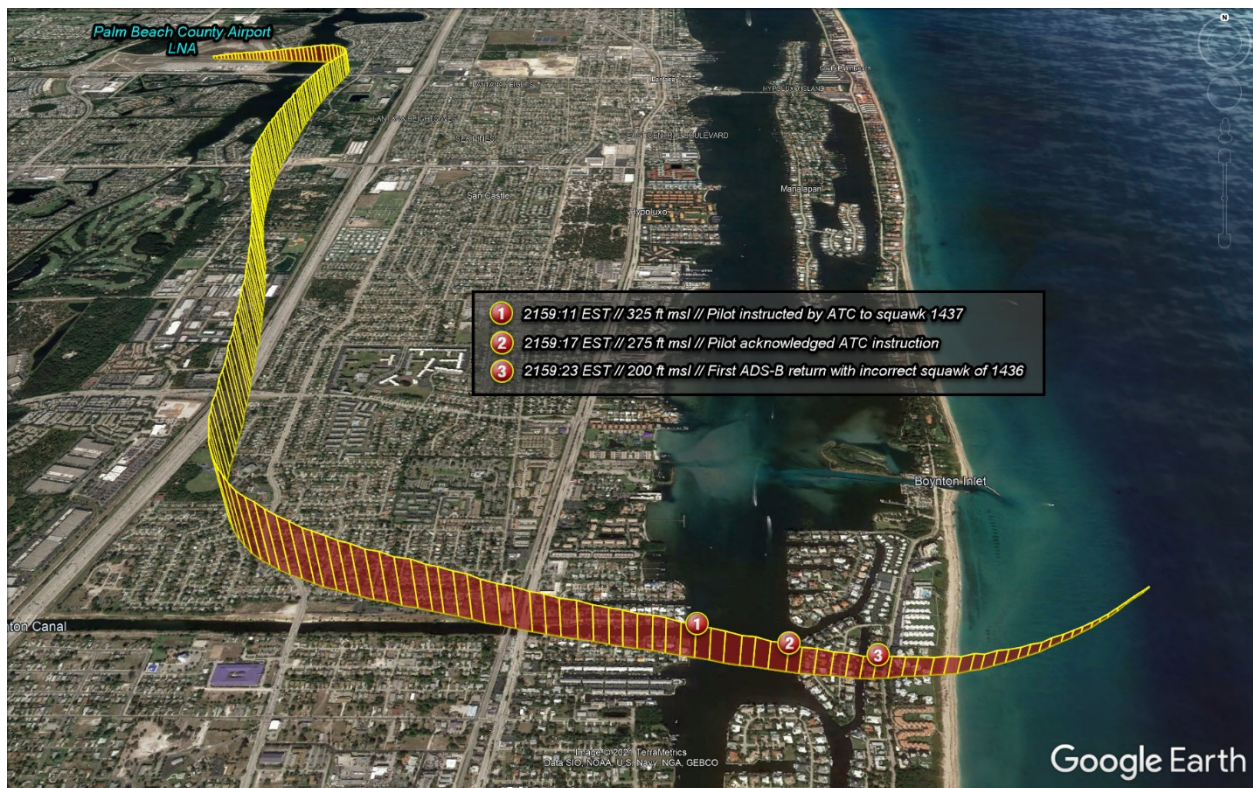
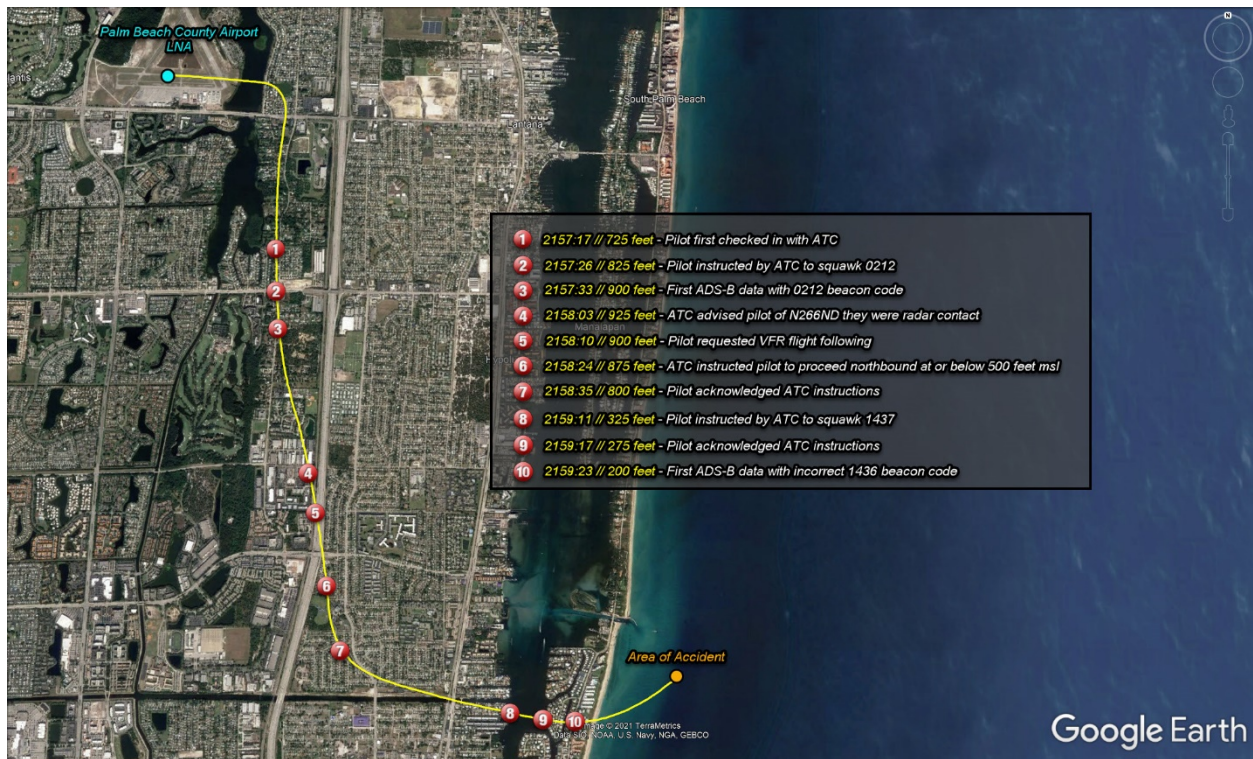
0059 The pilot of N266ND responded with a correct readback. A few seconds later, the AR controller instructed the pilot of N266ND to squawk 1437; the pilot acknowledged with a correct readback.

After several seconds, the AR controller advised the pilot of N266ND that he had the last digit wrong *[according to ADS-B data, N266ND was showing a beacon code of 1436]* and instructed him again to squawk 1437. There was no response received from the pilot.

2.0 Automatic Dependent Surveillance – Broadcast

The following figures were produced using ADS-B data provided by the FAA. Figure 1 shows the accident flight track with the first and last recorded data points. Figure 2 shows the entire accident flight track with key points illustrated. Figure 3 is a zoomed view of the final portion of the accident flight in profile view with the last beacon code assignment information illustrated.





F. LIST OF ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Partial Transcript

Attachment 2: ADS-B Data

Submitted by:

Brian Soper

Senior Air Traffic Control Investigator