



AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION AND INQUIRY BOARD

FINAL REPORT

RP-C 1234 **PIPER AIRCRAFT INC., PA-32-300**

OPERATOR: FLITELINE AIRWAYS PHILS., INC.

TYPE OF OPERATION: NON-SCHEDULED COMMERCIAL FLIGHT

DATE OF OCCURRENCE: NOVEMBER 30, 2023

***PLACE OF OCCURRENCE: WITHIN THE VICINITY OF CASALA, SAN
MARIANO, ISABELA, PHILIPPINES***



BASIC INFORMATION

Aircraft Registration No. : RP- C1234

Aircraft Type/Model : Piper Aircraft Inc., PA-32-300

Operator : Fliteline Airways Phils. Inc.

Address of Operator : Unit M Building 4, Salem Complex Domestic Road, Pasay City, Philippines

Place of Occurrence : Within the vicinity of Casala, San Mariano, Isabela, Philippines

Date/Time of Occurrence : November 30, 2023 at about 1040H/0240 UTC

Type of Operation : Non-Scheduled Passenger

Phase of Flight : Cruise

Type of Occurrence : Controlled Flight Into-Terrain

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On or about 1040H local time, November 30, 2023, a Piper Aircraft Inc. PA-32-300 type of aircraft with registry number RP-C1234 on a chartered flight was declared missing by the Cauayan principal airport duty air traffic controller (ATC) after the pilot failed to report to his destination airport for more than his estimated time of arrival. The said aircraft, operated by Fliteline Airways Phils. Inc., took off from Cauayan Principal Airport (RPUY) bound for Palanan Community Airport (RPLN) with a pilot and passenger on board. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed, and a VFR flight plan had been filed in RPUY and was to be terminated at RPLN.

Upon notification, the Philippine Aeronautical Rescue Coordinating Center (PARCC) activated the Regional Search and Rescue Operation (SAR) on the same day. The Regional Disaster Risk Management Council (RDRMC) Region II likewise activated two (2) SAR teams from the West (San Mariano Group) and East Sector (Palanan Group) composed of combined members of the Philippine Army (PA) and the Philippine National Police (PNP) who were deployed in the mountainous area of Sierra Madre. Tactical Air Group 2 (TOG) PAF was the incident management team center. At about 0700H the following day, the operator conducted SAR operations within the 10 nautical miles of the final reported area of the aircraft on Flightrada24; however, it was discontinued due to dense cloud concentration in the area.

At about 0800H on December 5, 2023, a Sokol helicopter from the 505th Air Rescue Group, PAF, and a civilian R44 helicopter, while on aerial reconnaissance, sited the location of the downed aircraft at an elevation of about 3,800 feet AGL at Casala, San Mariano, Isabela. The crash site has a coordinate of 16.87170104N and 122.25588149E, with the aircraft's final heading being north. It was located on dense vegetation and trees covering the mountain wall area with an undetermined terrain slope. From an aerial perspective, the crash site has traces of aircraft debris distributed within the aircraft wreckage. Further, based on the ground SAR personnel, the presence of high terrain and intense rains in the area hampers the retrieval operation.

On December 6, 2023, the SAR team from the 505th ARG was able to reach the crash site after being hoisted down from the helicopter. The pilot was found to be fatally injured and was brought to the Incident Command Center at Tactical Operations Group 2, PAF, on December 8, 2023. The lone passenger was also found to be fatally injured in a ravine several meters from the crash site the following day. The body was also brought to the Incident Command Center at Tactical Operations Group 2, PAF, the same day.

PROBABLE CAUSE

- **Primary Cause Factor**
 - a. The pilot's decision to continue the flight from visual meteorological conditions into instrument meteorological conditions resulted in a reduced ability to visually navigate, which led to controlled flight into terrain.
- **Contributory Cause Factor**
 - a. The lack of situational awareness.

SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS

The safety deficiencies detailed in this report have been fully addressed as a result of the safety measures implemented by the Operator. Consequently, no further safety recommendations are being proposed.

SAFETY ACTIONS

Following the occurrence, Fliteline Airways Phils. Inc. initiated the following safety corrective actions (Appendix A):

- a. Revision of Company Operations Manual Part-A regarding the VFR route from Cauayan Principal Airport (RPUY) to Palanan Community Airport (RPLN) and vice versa, including position reporting, altitude monitoring, approach/takeoff practices, and emergency procedures.

- b.** Fliteline Airways Phils. Inc. conducted a presentation to all company pilots prior to their flight, emphasizing the hazards of its nature and being vigilant on their flight.

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