



# Aviation Short Investigation Final Report

Aircraft Ditching

Cessna 210L – N727TJ

**Near West End, Grand Bahama, Bahamas  
14<sup>th</sup> December, 2017**

**AAID Aviation Occurrence Investigation  
AO-17-002176**

**Final Report – 23<sup>rd</sup> August, 2019**

### **The Air Accident Investigation Department (AAID)**

The Air Accident Investigation Department (AAID) is the independent accident investigation department under the Bahamas Ministry of Tourism and Aviation (MOTA) charged with the responsibility of investigating all aviation accidents and incidents in the Bahamas.

The AAID's function is to promote and improve safety and public confidence in the aviation industry through excellence in:

- Independent investigation of aviation accidents and other safety occurrences
- Safety data recording, analysis and research
- Fostering safety awareness, knowledge and action.

**The AAID does not investigate for the purpose of apportioning blame or to provide a means for determining liability.** At the same time, an investigation report must include factual material of sufficient weight to support the analysis and findings. At all times the AAID endeavors to balance the use of material that could imply adverse comment with the need to properly explain what happened, and why, in a fair and unbiased manner.

The AAID performs its functions in accordance with the provisions of the Bahamas Civil Aviation Act 2016, Civil Aviation (Investigations of Air Accidents and Incidents) Regulations and Amendment Regulations 2017, International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) Annex 13 (Eleventh edition, July 2016 – latest revision) and, where applicable, relevant international agreements.

The Air Accident Investigation Department is mandated by the Ministry of Tourism and Aviation to investigate air transportation accidents and incidents, determine probable causes of accidents and incidents, issue safety recommendations, study transportation safety issues and evaluate the safety effectiveness of agencies and stakeholders involved in air transportation. The objective of a safety investigation is to identify and reduce safety-related risk. AAID investigations determine and communicate the safety factors related to the transport safety matter being investigated.

The AAID makes public its findings and recommendations through accident reports, safety studies, special investigation reports, safety recommendations and safety alerts. Unless otherwise indicated, recommendations in this report are addressed to the regulatory authorities of the State having responsibility for the matters with which the recommendation is concerned. It is for those authorities to decide what action is taken. When the AAID issues a safety recommendation, the person, organization or agency is required to provide a written response without delay. The response shall indicate whether the person, organization or agency accepts the recommendation, any reasons for not accepting part or all of the recommendation(s), and details of any proposed safety action(s) resulting from the recommendation(s) issued.

Official Copies of accident reports can be obtained by contacting:

Air Accident Investigation Department  
2nd Floor, Manx Corporate Center  
#45 West Bay Street  
P. O. Box CB-11702  
Nassau N. P., Bahamas  
Tel: 1 (242) 397-5513 / 5509 / 5520 / 5525  
Fax: (242) 327-2192

Additional copies of the reports can be viewed on the AAID's website at: <http://www.baaaid.org> or requested by email: [baaid@bahamas.gov.bs](mailto:baaid@bahamas.gov.bs).

## **AIR ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION DEPARTMENT**

**Registered Owner:** Tropikordia Inc.

**Manufacturer:** Cessna

**Aircraft Type:** C210

**Nationality:** United States of America

**Registration:** N727TJ

**Place of Accident:** Near West End, Grand Bahama

**Date and Time:** 14<sup>th</sup> December, 2017, 11:30 am

**Notification:** BCAA, NTSB, FAA

**Investigating Authority:** Air Accident Investigation Department,  
Ministry of Tourism and Aviation

**Investigator in Charge:** Kendall Dorsett Jr.

**Accredited Representatives:** Tim Monville (NTSB)

**Technical Advisors:**

**Releasing Authority:** Air Accident Investigation Department

**Date of Draft Final  
Report Publication:** 23<sup>rd</sup> August, 2019

## Aircraft Accident – Cessna 210 N727TJ

### What Happened?

On December 14<sup>th</sup>, 2017 at 12:06 pm, the Air Accident Investigation Department was notified by Freeport Air Traffic Control that a Cessna 210, N727TJ with two souls on board had ditched into waters some 8.5 NM west of West End, Grand Bahama.

Prior to, Miami Air Traffic Control had been in communication with the Cessna 210 aircraft and was advised by the pilot that the aircraft was experiencing fuel flow issues while en-route to North Eleuthera, Bahamas (MYEH), having departed from Gainesville, Florida (KGNV).

As a result, a decision was made to divert to the West End Airport, Grand Bahama, however, the pilot ditched the aircraft in waters approximately 8.5 NM NW of the airfield.

Rescue crew from the US Coast Guard were dispatched and located and hoisted one (1) survivor who was transported to the Grand Bahama International Airport. Initial information from the survivor indicated that her counterpart was not able to get out of the aircraft, which she reported to have sunk.

US Coast Guard conducted search efforts on the 14<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> December 2017, but yielded no results. A private salvage and recovery mission was launched between the 7<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> July, 2018, and the aircraft was located and positively identified. However, it was deemed unfeasible to bring the aircraft to the surface based on compounding factors at the time. Another private salvage and recovery mission took place between 6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> February 2019 but the mission was unsuccessful in bringing the aircraft to the surface.

### Investigation Findings

- Pilot in command of the aircraft possessed the required airman and medical certification as per Federal Aviation Regulations 61.23 (3).
- Aircraft N727TJ was registered and certified in accordance with Federal Aviation Regulations 91.203.
- Analysis of weather was conducted and it was deemed as not contributory to the occurrence of this accident.
- An analysis of a sample from fuel supplier was conducted and results were of grade 1-A.

## Search and Rescue Efforts

- **14<sup>th</sup> Dec. 2017 @ 11:36 am (1636 UTC)** - U.S. Coast Guard District Seven received a report from Miami Air Traffic Control stating that they were in communication with a CESSNA 210 (N727TJ) aircraft with 2 souls on board that was experiencing fuel flow issues and was planning to ditch approximately 15NM NW of Freeport, Grand Bahama, Bahamas. District Seven launched the ready Air Station Miami MH-65 helicopter and tasked Sector Miami to issue an Urgent Marine Information Broadcast and notified Air Force Rescue Coordination Center and Operations Bahamas & Turks and Caicos.
- **14<sup>th</sup> Dec. 2017 @ 1:46 pm (1846 UTC)** - The Air Station Miami MH-65 helicopter arrived on scene, located and hoisted one (1) survivor and transported her to the Grand Bahama International Airport (MYGF). Initial information from the survivor indicated that the pilot in command was not able to get out of the aircraft which is reported to have sunk. The survivor was taken to Freeport hospital in stable condition.
- The Air Station Miami MH-65 helicopter completed searches with negative results. The Air Station Clearwater MH-60 helicopter forward deployed to Atlantic Undersea Test and Evaluation Center on Andros Island, Bahamas, completed a night time search with CGC Robert Yered also on scene. Those searches yielded no sightings. The CGC Robert Yered remained on scene throughout the night.
- The CGC Robert Yered remained on scene overnight searching with no sightings. The Air Station Clearwater MH-60 helicopter forward deployed to Atlantic Undersea Test and Evaluation Center on Andros Island, Bahamas conducted and CGC Robert Yered completed all subsequent searches with no sightings.

## Assets Used During Search Efforts

**CGC Robert Yered**



**CIV PA-32**



**USCG MH-65 Dolphin Helicopter**



**USCG MH-60**



## Salvage and Recovery Efforts

In the aftermath of the unsuccessful attempt to locate Cessna N727TJ, a private salvage and recovery mission was organized and launched between the 7<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> July, 2018. With the aid of a submersible ROV (remote operated vehicle), the aircraft was located and positively identified on the 10<sup>th</sup> July, 2018 (see photos below). However, compounding factors made it unfeasible for the aircraft to be brought to the surface.





Another recovery attempt was made between 6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> February 2019. Again, there were challenges experienced while raising the aircraft to the surface and the mission was unsuccessful. Up to the date of the publication of this report, it is unknown whether there will be subsequent attempts to retrieve the aircraft. However, the AAID will follow the requirements of ICAO Annex 13 5.13 which states: **If, after the investigation has been closed, new and significant evidence becomes available, the State which conducted the investigation shall reopen it.**

## **Crew Experience**

### **Pilot**

The pilot of the aircraft was a 57 year old male at the time of the accident. He had been issued a United States Private Pilot License January 19<sup>th</sup> 2005, with single-engine land and sea privileges along with an instrument airplane rating. He possessed a Third Class Medical Certificate issued on February 5<sup>th</sup>, 2016 with the restriction ‘Must wear corrective lenses’

### **The Aircraft**

N727TJ, Cessna 210L is an all metal, high wing, single engine airplane equipped with retractable tricycle landing gear and is designed for general utility purposes.

This airplane is certificated in the normal category. Spins and aerobatic maneuvers are not permitted in normal category airplanes. The airplane is approved for day and night VFR/IFR operations when equipped in accordance with F.A.R. 91 or F.A.R 135.

The airplane is powered by a horizontally opposed, six cylinder, direct drive, normally aspirated, air cooled, fuel injected engine. The engine is a Continental Model IO-520-L and is rated at 285/300 horsepower.

The airplane fuel system consists of two 45 gallon vented integral fuel bays. Fuel flows from these bays through a reservoir tank to the fuel selector valve, through a bypass in the electric auxiliary fuel pump and the fuel strainer to the engine-driven fuel pump. From here fuel is distributed to the engine cylinders via a control unit and manifold.

## Safety Action

Whether or not the AAID identifies safety issues in the course of an investigation, relevant organizations may proactively initiate safety action in order to reduce their safety risk.

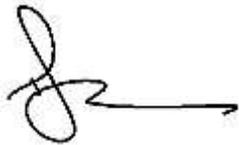
## Safety Message

In lieu of the fact that the accident in question involves an unrecovered aircraft, it should be noted that the ability of the AAID to issue a safety message applicable to this investigation is reduced. However, in the aftermath of each occurrence, it is the intent of the AAID to promote and reiterate the importance of adhering to those regulations, policies, practices and procedures that allow for safe flight operations.

## About this report

Decisions regarding whether to conduct an investigation, and the scope of an investigation, are based on many factors, including the level of safety benefit likely to be obtained from an investigation. For this occurrence, a limited-scope, fact-gathering investigation was conducted in order to produce a summary report, and allow for greater industry awareness of potential safety issues and possible safety actions.

**By the Air Accident Investigation Department**



**Delvin R. Major**  
**Chief Investigator of Air Accidents**