



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	HUNTER, Arkansas	Accident Number:	FTW96LA258
Date & Time:	June 18, 1996, 12:15 Local	Registration:	N7319C
Aircraft:	Air Tractor 301A	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Defining Event:		Injuries:	1 Serious
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 137: Agricultural		

Analysis

Several witnesses in the area at the time of the accident reported that they were observing the airplane as it was spraying a field. They stated that they could not hear the engine running as the airplane began descending toward the ground. According to one of the witnesses, the engine was 'trying to get its sound back' prior to the airplane impacting the ground in a right wing low attitude. The pilot stated that he did not recall any part of the accident event. According to the pilot's ground crew, the airplane was refueled (left wing tank only) prior to the flight. The right wing tank was not checked or refueled. According to the operator, each wing fuel tank has a capacity of 60 gallons of usable fuel. The flight commenced at 1100, and was flying approximately 1 hour 15 minutes prior to the accident. Fuel tank integrity was compromised by impact damage. The airplane was destroyed by impact forces, and an engine run could not be performed.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The loss of engine power for undetermined reasons.

Findings

Occurrence #1: LOSS OF ENGINE POWER
Phase of Operation: MANEUVERING - AERIAL APPLICATION

Findings

1. (C) REASON FOR OCCURRENCE UNDETERMINED

Occurrence #2: FORCED LANDING

Phase of Operation: EMERGENCY DESCENT/LANDING

Occurrence #3: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER

Phase of Operation: EMERGENCY DESCENT/LANDING

Factual Information

On June 18, 1996, approximately 1215 central daylight time, an Air Tractor 301A, N7319C, registered to and operated by a private owner, was destroyed following a forced landing after a loss of engine power while applying pesticides to a rice field in the vicinity of Hunter, Arkansas. The commercial pilot sustained serious injuries. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed, and no flight plan was filed for the Title 14 CFR Part 137 aerial application flight. The flight originated from a private grass strip near the accident site.

Several witnesses in the area at the time of the accident reported they were observing the airplane as it was spraying a field. They stated that, they could not hear the engine running as the airplane began descending toward the ground. According to one of the witnesses, the engine was "trying to get its sound back" prior to the airplane impacting the ground in a right wing low attitude. The pilot stated that he did not recall any part of the accident event. An interview with one of the pilot's ground crew revealed that the aircraft was refueled (left wing tank only) prior to the flight. He also stated that the right wing fuel tank was not checked or refueled. According to the operator, the each wing fuel tank has a capacity of 60 gallons of usable fuel. The airplane commenced the flight at 1100, and was flying approximately 1 hour 15 minutes prior to the accident. Fuel tank integrity was compromised by impact damage.

The airplane was destroyed by impact forces, and a post accident engine run could not be performed.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial	Age:	42, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Front
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	None	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 2 Valid Medical--no waivers/lim.	Last FAA Medical Exam:	February 6, 1996
Occupational Pilot:	Yes	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	1200 hours (Total, all aircraft), 900 hours (Total, this make and model), 150 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 75 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 1 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Air Tractor	Registration:	N7319C
Model/Series:	301A 301A	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Restricted (Special)	Serial Number:	301-0682
Landing Gear Type:	Tailwheel	Seats:	1
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	100 hour	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	1500 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:		Engine Manufacturer:	P&W
ELT:		Engine Model/Series:	R-1340-AN14B
Registered Owner:	GARVIN L. MELVIN	Rated Power:	600 Horsepower
Operator:		Operating Certificate(s) Held:	
Operator Does Business As:	L&M AERIAL SERVICE	Operator Designator Code:	LM7G

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:		Distance from Accident Site:	
Observation Time:		Direction from Accident Site:	
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	/	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	0°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:		Temperature/Dew Point:	32°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:		Type of Flight Plan Filed:	Unknown
Destination:		Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	11:00 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Airport Information

Airport:		Runway Surface Type:	
Airport Elevation:		Runway Surface Condition:	
Runway Used:	0	IFR Approach:	
Runway Length/Width:		VFR Approach/Landing:	Forced landing

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Serious	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Passenger Injuries:		Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 Serious	Latitude, Longitude:	35.050872,-91.119155(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC): Lemishko, Alexander

Additional Participating Persons:

Original Publish Date: February 18, 1997

Last Revision Date:

Investigation Class: [Class](#)

Note:

Investigation Docket: <https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=19871>

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The NTSB does not assign fault or blame for an accident or incident; rather, as specified by NTSB regulation, “accident/incident investigations are fact-finding proceedings with no formal issues and no adverse parties ... and are not conducted for the purpose of determining the rights or liabilities of any person” (Title 49 *Code of Federal Regulations* section 831.4). Assignment of fault or legal liability is not relevant to the NTSB’s statutory mission to improve transportation safety by investigating accidents and incidents and issuing safety recommendations. In addition, statutory language prohibits the admission into evidence or use of any part of an NTSB report related to an accident in a civil action for damages resulting from a matter mentioned in the report (Title 49 *United States Code* section 1154(b)). A factual report that may be admissible under 49 *United States Code* section 1154(b) is available [here](#).