



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	EL INDIO, Texas	Accident Number:	FTW97LA232
Date & Time:	June 23, 1997, 08:05 Local	Registration:	N7684V
Aircraft:	Aero Commander CALLAIR A-9B	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	1 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 137: Agricultural		

Analysis

The pilot was working on a boll weevil eradication contract and was in the habit of servicing the airplane (with fuel, oil, and applicant) at the end of each day. He reported that the day before the accident, he was distracted from his servicing process by the arrival of a customer and the news of a family problem. The pilot reported that the next morning, while preflighting the airplane, 'I checked the sumps but did not remove the fuel caps to visually check the fuel [quantity].' He departed for the first flight of the day with the fuel selector positioned to a nonserviced tank; its fuel quantity gage indicated that it was 'full.' While flying the first application swath, the engine lost power. The pilot 'saw the fuel pressure light come on and he turned on the boost pump, but he delayed switching fuel tanks because he thought he had full tanks on both sides and there was some other problem.' The pilot performed a forced landing to a muddy cotton field, and the airplane came to rest inverted.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: the pilot's inadequate preflight, subsequent fuel starvation, and failure of the pilot to reposition the fuel selector to another tank (perform emergency procedure) after the loss of engine power, which resulted in a forced landing and subsequent nose-over. Factors relating to the accident were: false fuel quantity indication, and the lack of suitable terrain for an emergency landing.

Findings

Occurrence #1: LOSS OF ENGINE POWER(TOTAL) - NONMECHANICAL
Phase of Operation: MANEUVERING

Findings

1. (C) AIRCRAFT PREFLIGHT - INADEQUATE - PILOT IN COMMAND
2. REFUELING - NOT PERFORMED - PILOT IN COMMAND
3. (F) ENGINE INSTRUMENTS,FUEL QUANTITY GAGE - FALSE INDICATION
4. (C) FLUID,FUEL - STARVATION

Occurrence #2: FORCED LANDING
Phase of Operation: EMERGENCY DESCENT/LANDING

Findings

5. (C) EMERGENCY PROCEDURE - NOT FOLLOWED - PILOT IN COMMAND

Occurrence #3: NOSE OVER
Phase of Operation: EMERGENCY LANDING

Findings

6. (F) TERRAIN CONDITION - NONE SUITABLE
7. (F) TERRAIN CONDITION - WET
8. (F) TERRAIN CONDITION - SOFT

Factual Information

On June 23, 1997, approximately 0805 central daylight time, a Callair A-9B agricultural airplane, N7684V, was substantially damaged during a forced landing following a total power loss near El Indio, Texas. The commercial pilot, sole occupant in the airplane, was not injured. The airplane was owned/operated by a private individual under Title 14 CFR Part 137. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed for the aerial application flight which had originated from a private airstrip approximately 5 minutes before the accident. No flight plan had been filed for the flight.

According to the pilot, he was working on a boll weevil eradication contract. He stated that he had been servicing the airplane (with fuel, oil, and applicant) at the end of each day. He reported that the day before the accident he was distracted from his servicing process by the arrival of a customer and the news of a family problem. The pilot reported that the next morning, while doing the preflight of the airplane, "I checked the sumps but did not remove the fuel caps to visually check the fuel [quantity]."

The pilot reported that he departed for the first flight of the day with the fuel selector on the right fuel tank; this was the fuel tank which was not serviced the day before. The pilot further reported that the right fuel gage indicated "full." While making his first application swath, the engine "quit." The pilot "saw the fuel pressure light come on and he turned on the boost pump"; he "delayed switching fuel tanks because he thought he had full tanks on both sides and that there was some other problem."

The pilot performed a forced landing to a cotton field. He stated that "I got down as smooth and slow as I could but the wheels got down into the mud and it flipped over." The airplane came to rest tail first in the inverted position.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial	Age:	51, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land; Multi-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Center
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:	June 1, 1997
Occupational Pilot:	Yes	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	10000 hours (Total, all aircraft), 1000 hours (Total, this make and model), 75 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 30 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 5 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Aero Commander	Registration:	N7684V
Model/Series:	CALLAIR A-9B CALLAIR A-	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Restricted (Special)	Serial Number:	1432
Landing Gear Type:	Tailwheel	Seats:	1
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	October 20, 1996 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	3000 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	75 Hrs	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	2720 Hrs	Engine Manufacturer:	Jacobs
ELT:	Not installed	Engine Model/Series:	R-755-SM
Registered Owner:	MICHAEL J. DICKENSON	Rated Power:	360 Horsepower
Operator:		Operating Certificate(s) Held:	
Operator Does Business As:		Operator Designator Code:	TKEG

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	MFE ,107 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	200 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	07:51 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	135°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	7 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	140°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	29 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	22°C / 19°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	(NONE)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:		Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	08:00 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Airport Information

Airport:		Runway Surface Type:	
Airport Elevation:		Runway Surface Condition:	
Runway Used:	0	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:		VFR Approach/Landing:	Forced landing

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:		Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 None	Latitude, Longitude:	28.509679,-100.309486(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Struhsaker, James
Additional Participating Persons:	HENRY L GAMEZ; SAN ANTONIO , TX
Original Publish Date:	June 26, 1998
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=20250

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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](#).