



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	LAFAYETTE, Louisiana	Accident Number:	FTW98LA193
Date & Time:	April 25, 1998, 08:02 Local	Registration:	N546R
Aircraft:	LERILLE P & W 1937	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	1 Serious
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The engine lost power due to fuel exhaustion while on final approach to runway 22L. The pilot reported to the tower controller that the airplane was 'out of fuel.' The airplane landed 150 yards short of the runway. During the landing roll, the airplane impacted trees, a 'small' ditch, and came to rest inverted. No usable fuel was observed in either of the aircraft's two fuel tanks. No discrepancies were found that would have prevented normal operation of the airplane.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The fuel exhaustion due to the pilot's failure to refuel. A factor was the lack of suitable terrain for the forced landing.

Findings

Occurrence #1: LOSS OF ENGINE POWER
Phase of Operation: APPROACH - VFR PATTERN - FINAL APPROACH

- Findings
1. (C) FLUID,FUEL - EXHAUSTION
 2. (C) REFUELING - NOT PERFORMED - PILOT IN COMMAND
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Occurrence #2: FORCED LANDING

Phase of Operation: APPROACH - VFR PATTERN - FINAL APPROACH

Occurrence #3: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER
Phase of Operation: EMERGENCY DESCENT/LANDING

Findings

3. (F) TERRAIN CONDITION - NONE SUITABLE
4. OBJECT - TREE(S)

Factual Information

On April 25, 1998, at 0802 central daylight time, a Lerille P & W 1937 amateur-built experimental airplane, N546R, owned and operated by the pilot, was substantially damaged during a forced landing following a loss of engine power near Lafayette, Louisiana. The non-instrument rated private pilot, the sole occupant, was seriously injured. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed and no flight plan was filed for the Title 14 CFR Part 91 personal flight. The local flight originated from the Lafayette Regional Airport, Lafayette, Louisiana, approximately 0700.

The 2,000 hour pilot reported in the Pilot/Operator Aircraft Accident Report (NTSB Form 6120.1/2) that he had accumulated a total of 13 hours in the single engine airplane. The pilot stated that the engine lost power while on final approach to runway 22L at the Lafayette Regional Airport. The airplane impacted trees during the landing roll and subsequently nosed over after impacting a "small" ditch, coming to rest in the inverted position. The airplane landed 150 yards short of the threshold of the runway.

An FAA representative reviewed the ATC recordings between the pilot and the tower controller. The pilot reported to the tower controller that the aircraft was "out of fuel."

An FAA inspector examined the airplane at the site and reported that both wings were destroyed and the center section of the fuselage sustained structural damage. He added that the engine mounts were broken and the engine was "tilted forward." No usable fuel was observed in either of the aircraft's two fuel tanks. No discrepancies were found that would have prevented normal operation of the airplane.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	61, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Left
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 3 Valid Medical--w/ waivers/lim	Last FAA Medical Exam:	August 26, 1996
Occupational Pilot:	UNK	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	2000 hours (Total, all aircraft), 13 hours (Total, this make and model), 2000 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 1 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	LERILLE	Registration:	N546R
Model/Series:	P & W 1937 P & W 1937	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	Yes
Airworthiness Certificate:	Experimental (Special)	Serial Number:	JRY03
Landing Gear Type:	Tailwheel	Seats:	2
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	3500 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	13 Hrs	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:		Engine Manufacturer:	P&W
ELT:	Not installed	Engine Model/Series:	R-985-AN1
Registered Owner:	RED LERILLE	Rated Power:	450 Horsepower
Operator:		Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None
Operator Does Business As:		Operator Designator Code:	

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	LFT ,42 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	
Observation Time:	08:24 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Visibility	15 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	10 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	170°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	20°C / 13°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	(LFT)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:		Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	07:00 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class C

Airport Information

Airport:	LAFAYETTE REGIONAL LFT	Runway Surface Type:	Asphalt
Airport Elevation:	42 ft msl	Runway Surface Condition:	Dry
Runway Used:	22L	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:	7651 ft / 150 ft	VFR Approach/Landing:	Traffic pattern

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Serious	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:		Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 Serious	Latitude, Longitude:	30.209573,-92.019538(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Casanova, Hector
Additional Participating Persons:	BOB GILLESPIE; BATON ROUGE , LA
Original Publish Date:	February 15, 2001
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=20584

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) is an independent federal agency charged by Congress with investigating every civil aviation accident in the United States and significant events in other modes of transportation—railroad, transit, highway, marine, pipeline, and commercial space. We determine the probable causes of the accidents and events we investigate, and issue safety recommendations aimed at preventing future occurrences. In addition, we conduct transportation safety research studies and offer information and other assistance to family members and survivors for each accident or event we investigate. We also serve as the appellate authority for enforcement actions involving aviation and mariner certificates issued by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and US Coast Guard, and we adjudicate appeals of civil penalty actions taken by the FAA.

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](#).