



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	CORONA, California	Accident Number:	LAX90FA229
Date & Time:	June 23, 1990, 18:55 Local	Registration:	N9302P
Aircraft:	PIPER PA-24-260	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	3 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

THE PLT HAD ARRIVED AT LAKE HAVASU ON THE EVENING PRECEDING THE ACCIDENT, AND WHEN HE TIED DOWN THE AIRPLANE ALL OF THE FUEL TANK DOORS WERE CLOSED. THE NEXT DAY, WHEN PREFLIGHTING THE AIRPLANE FOR HIS FLIGHT TO TORRANCE, HE NOTICED THAT THE RIGHT AUX FUEL TANK DOOR WAS OPEN. WHILE ENROUTE TO TORRANCE, AND USING THE AUX FUEL TANK, THE ENGINE SUSTAINED A TOTAL LOSS OF POWER. EMERG PROCEDURES TO RESTART THE ENGINE WERE TO NO AVAIL AND THE PLT LANDED IN AN OPEN FIELD. A CUPFUL OF SAND WAS FOUND IN THE RIGHT AUXILIARY FUEL TANK, AND SAND CONTAMINATES WERE ALSO FOUND IN THE RIGHT AUXILIARY FUEL TANK PORT. SOME OF THE INJECTOR NOZZLES WERE PLUGGED WITH AN UNIDENTIFIED SUBSTANCE.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: SABOTAGE WHEREIN UNKNOWN PERSON(S) PUT SAND IN THE AIRPLANE'S FUEL TANK.

Findings

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

Findings

1. (C) FUEL SYSTEM - CONTAMINATION

- 2. (C) SABOTAGE - INTENTIONAL - UNKNOWN
- 3. (C) FLUID,FUEL - STARVATION

Occurrence #2: FORCED LANDING
Phase of Operation: LANDING - FLARE/TOUCHDOWN

Occurrence #3: MAIN GEAR COLLAPSED
Phase of Operation: LANDING - FLARE/TOUCHDOWN

Factual Information

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	59, 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:	January 19, 1989
Occupational Pilot:	No	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	301 hours (Total, all aircraft), 103 hours (Total, this make and model), 197 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 3 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 1 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 1 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	PIPER	Registration:	N9302P
Model/Series:	PA-24-260 PA-24-260	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	24-4798
Landing Gear Type:	Retractable - Tricycle	Seats:	4
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	October 1, 1989 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	3100 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	33 Hrs	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	2171 Hrs	Engine Manufacturer:	LYCOMING
ELT:	Installed, not activated	Engine Model/Series:	IO-540-D4A5
Registered Owner:	ROBERT J. THALMANN	Rated Power:	260 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:		Distance from Accident Site:	
Observation Time:		Direction from Accident Site:	
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Visibility	25 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:	27°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	LAKE HAVASU , AZ (LHU)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	TORRANCE , CA (TOA)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	17:40 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Airport Information

Airport:	CORONA L66	Runway Surface Type:	
Airport Elevation:	533 ft msl	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:	2 None	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	3 None	Latitude, Longitude:	

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Llorente, A.d.
Additional Participating Persons:	CARL A CHRISTOPHER; RIVERSIDE , CA
Original Publish Date:	December 14, 1992
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=26636

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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](#).