



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	SCOTTSDALE, Arizona	Accident Number:	LAX97LA098
Date & Time:	January 31, 1997, 13:00 Local	Registration:	N6638V
Aircraft:	Bellanca 17-30A	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	2 Minor
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The pilot contacted the FAA control tower while on approach to his destination and was advised to report on a long right base for runway 21. The pilot reported about 4 miles from the airport the engine suddenly dropped to idle, it did not quit, and the throttle had no effect on the rpm. He stated that he immediately looked at the fuel gauge and noticed approximately 1/4 tank. He tried switching tanks, but could not get a restart or increase from idle. According to FAA inspectors, the fuel selector was found on the left outboard fuel tank and the outboard fuel tanks were found empty.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: fuel exhaustion due to the pilot's improper fuel management.

Findings

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

Findings

1. TERRAIN CONDITION - NONE SUITABLE
 2. (C) FLUID,FUEL - EXHAUSTION
 3. (C) FUEL MANAGEMENT - IMPROPER - PILOT IN COMMAND
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Occurrence #2: FORCED LANDING
Phase of Operation: DESCENT - EMERGENCY

Factual Information

On January 31, 1997, about 1300 hours mountain standard time, a Bellanca 17-30A, N6638V, was substantially damaged during a forced landing near Scottsdale, Arizona. The pilot and his passenger received minor injuries. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed for the personal cross-country flight and no flight plan was filed. The flight originated at North Las Vegas, Nevada, at 1015.

The pilot contacted the Scottsdale Air Traffic Control Tower and was advised to enter a right base leg for runway 21. The pilot stated that when he was about 4 miles from the airport at 2,500 feet msl, the engine suddenly dropped to idle, it did not quit, and the throttle had no effect on the rpm. He stated that he immediately noticed approximately 1/4 tank of fuel and tried switching tanks, but could not get a restart or increase from idle.

According to FAA inspectors, the fuel selector was found on the left outboard fuel tank. Both outboard fuel tanks were found to be empty.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	55, 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:	May 9, 1995
Occupational Pilot:	No	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	716 hours (Total, all aircraft), 153 hours (Total, this make and model), 631 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 3 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 2 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 2 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Bellanca	Registration:	N6638V
Model/Series:	17-30A 17-30A	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	30303
Landing Gear Type:	Retractable - Tricycle	Seats:	4
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	November 7, 1996 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	3400 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	13 Hrs	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	2430 Hrs	Engine Manufacturer:	Continental
ELT:	Installed, activated, aided in locating accident	Engine Model/Series:	IO-520
Registered Owner:	LAWRENCE PACKER	Rated Power:	300 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:	KSD	Distance from Accident Site:	
Observation Time:	12:47 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Visibility	50 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	4 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	270°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	21°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	NORTH LAS VEGAS, NV (VGT)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	(SDL)	Type of Clearance:	VFR
Departure Time:	10:15 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class D

Airport Information

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

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Minor	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	1 Minor	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	2 Minor	Latitude, Longitude:	33.609657,-111.89083(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Petterson, George
Additional Participating Persons:	JIM KERR; SCOTTSDALE , AZ
Original Publish Date:	February 2, 1998
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=29722

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