Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	TULARE, California	**Accident Number:**	LAX98LA142
Date & Time:	April 26, 1998, 09:11 Local	**Registration:**	N9144S
Aircraft:	Beech C23	**Aircraft Damage:**	Substantial
Defining Event:		**Injuries:**	2 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

During the landing rollout, the airplane departed the runway laterally and impacted a ditch 75 to 100 feet off the side of the runway. The pilot stated that, after a minor directional correction to the right, the aircraft would not respond to left steering inputs until full rudder was applied. At that time the aircraft entered an abrupt swerve to the left and departed the runway. The aircraft was damaged to the extent that it was not possible to conduct a high speed taxi test to evaluate aircraft response to nosewheel steering commands.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The malfunction of the nose wheel steering for undetermined reasons.

Findings

Occurrence #1: LOSS OF CONTROL - ON GROUND/WATER
Phase of Operation: LANDING - ROLL

Findings
1. LANDING GEAR,STEERING SYSTEM - MALFUNCTION
2. (C) REASON FOR OCCURRENCE UNDETERMINED

Occurrence #2: ON GROUND/WATER ENCOUNTER WITH TERRAIN/WATER
Phase of Operation: LANDING - ROLL

Findings
3. (F) TERRAIN CONDITION - DITCH

Factual Information

On April 26, 1998, at 0911 hours Pacific daylight time, a Beech C23, N9144S, was substantially damaged when it departed the runway laterally and impacted a ditch 75 to 100 feet off the side of the runway at Tulare, California. The private pilot and one passenger were not injured and no property damage was incurred. The flight had departed from Bakersfield, California, on a visual flight to Tulare. No flight plan was filed and visual meteorological conditions prevailed for the personal flight.

The pilot stated in his report that, on the landing roll, he applied right rudder to correct his ground path to runway centerline. When he applied left rudder to stop the turn, he got no aircraft response until he had applied full left rudder. At that time the aircraft entered an abrupt left turn from which he could not recover before departing the runway surface.

The aircraft was damaged to the extent that it was not possible to conduct a high speed taxi test to evaluate aircraft response to nosewheel steering commands.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	**Age:**	41,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--no waivers/lim.	**Last FAA Medical Exam:**	July 25, 1997
Occupational Pilot:	No	**Last Flight Review or Equivalent:**	
Flight Time:	92 hours (Total, all aircraft), 9 hours (Total, this make and model), 44 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 3 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 2 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 1 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Beech	**Registration:**	N9144S
Model/Series:	C23 C23	**Aircraft Category:**	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		**Amateur Built:**	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal; Utility	**Serial Number:**	M-1767
Landing Gear Type:	Retractable - Tricycle	**Seats:**	4
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	March 20, 1998 Annual	**Certified Max Gross Wt.:**	2800 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	42 Hrs	**Engines:**	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	2008 Hrs	**Engine Manufacturer:**	Lycoming
ELT:	Installed, not activated	**Engine Model/Series:**	O-360 SER
Registered Owner:	TED C. WITT	**Rated Power:**	180 Horsepower
Operator:	KERN CHARTER SERVICE	**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:	KVI ,292 ft msl	**Distance from Accident Site:**	10 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	09:15 Local	**Direction from Accident Site:**	350°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	**Visibility**	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	**Visibility (RVR):**	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	4 knots /	**Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:**	/
Wind Direction:	160°	**Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:**	/
Altimeter Setting:	30 inches Hg	**Temperature/Dew Point:**	16°C / 9°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	BAKERSFIELD , CA (L45)	**Type of Flight Plan Filed:**	None
Destination:	(TLR)	**Type of Clearance:**	None
Departure Time:	08:25 Local	**Type of Airspace:**	Class E

Airport Information

Airport:	MEFFORD FIELD TUR	**Runway Surface Type:**	Asphalt
Airport Elevation:	271 ft msl	**Runway Surface Condition:**	Dry
Runway Used:	13	**IFR Approach:**	None
Runway Length/Width:	3914 ft / 75 ft	**VFR Approach/Landing:**	Full stop;Traffic pattern

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 None	**Aircraft Damage:**	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	1 None	**Aircraft Fire:**	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	**Aircraft Explosion:**	None
Total Injuries:	2 None	**Latitude, Longitude:**	36.180725,-119.359848(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Armstrong, Weldon
Additional Participating Persons:	JAMES SHAMP; FRESNO , CA
Original Publish Date:	April 6, 2001
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=30073