



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	SUSSEX, New Jersey	Accident Number:	NYC85LA089
Date & Time:	March 23, 1985, 17:00 Local	Registration:	N99677
Aircraft:	Ercoupe (Eng & Research Corp.) 415-D	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	1 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

THE ACFT EXPERIENCED A LOSS OF ENG PWR DURING CLIMB SHORTLY AFTER TAKEOFF AND WAS SUBSTANTIALLY DAMAGED DURING THE FORCED LANDING WHICH RESULTED. THE PLT REPORTED THE ENG COUGHED AND LOST PWR, HOWEVER, WHEN THE THROTTLE WAS PUMPED, PWR RETURNED. PWR WAS THEN LOST ONCE AGAIN WHEN THE THROTTLE WAS MOVED TO THE FULL OPEN POSITION. POST ACCIDENT INSPECTION OF THE ACFT AND ENG REVEALED THE FUEL PRIMER WAS UNLOCKED AND SLIGHTLY PULLED BACK. SEVERAL SPARK PLUGS WERE SOOT COVERED AS WAS THE INSIDE OF THE EXHAUST PIPE. A FUEL SAMPLE TAKEN FROM THE ACFT WAS BROWN IN COLOR AND CONTAMINATED WITH WATER. AFTER REPAIRING SOME DAMAGE INCURRED IN THE ACCIDENT AND REPLACING A WORN START CLUTCH, THE ENG WAS STARTED AND IT OPERATED NORMALLY.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be:

Findings

Occurrence #1: LOSS OF ENGINE POWER
Phase of Operation: CLIMB - TO CRUISE

Findings

1. (C) FLUID,FUEL - CONTAMINATION
2. POWERPLANT CONTROLS - IMPROPER - PILOT IN COMMAND

Occurrence #2: FORCED LANDING

Phase of Operation: LANDING

Factual Information

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	37, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Front
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:	May 11, 1984
Occupational Pilot:	UNK	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	1500 hours (Total, all aircraft), 1500 hours (Total, this make and model), 1500 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 4 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Ercoupe (Eng & Research Corp.)	Registration:	N99677
Model/Series:	415-D 415-D	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	2300
Landing Gear Type:		Seats:	
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	1260 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	2300 Hrs	Engine Manufacturer:	CONTINENTAL
ELT:	Installed, activated	Engine Model/Series:	UNKNOWN
Registered Owner:	CARL LASTELLA	Rated Power:	
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:	16:30 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Unknown	Visibility	
Lowest Ceiling:	Unknown	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	5 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	350°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:		Temperature/Dew Point:	
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	SUSSEX , NJ	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:		Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	17:00 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Airport Information

Airport:		Runway Surface Type:	
Airport Elevation:	0 ft msl	Runway Surface Condition:	
Runway Used:	0	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:	0 ft / 0 ft	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:	

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC): Taylor, Vernon

Additional Participating Persons:

Original Publish Date:

Last Revision Date:

Investigation Class: [Class](#)

Note:

Investigation Docket: <https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=35848>

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](#).