Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	LINDEN, New Jersey	**Accident Number:**	NYC94LA044
Date & Time:	December 23, 1993, 19:00 Local	**Registration:**	N31617
Aircraft:	MOONEY 20E	**Aircraft Damage:**	Substantial
Defining Event:		**Injuries:**	1 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

JUST AFTER TAKEOFF, AT AN ALTITUDE OF APPROXIMATELY 300 FEET, THE PILOT EXPERIENCED A TOTAL LOSS OF ENGINE POWER. HE ELECTED TO LAND ON THE RUNWAY WITH THE LANDING GEAR RETRACTED. THE EXAMINATION OF THE AIRPLANE REVEALED 'LARGE QUANTITIES OF WATER,' FOUND IN THE FUEL INJECTORS, GASCOLATOR, MAIN FUEL LINE, AND THE RIGHT FUEL TANK.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: THE PILOT'S INADEQUATE PREFLIGHT INSPECTION WHICH FAILED TO DETECT WATER-CONTAMINATED FUEL AND RESULTED IN THE LOSS OF ENGINE POWER.

Findings

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

Findings
1. (F) FLUID,FUEL - CONTAMINATION
2. (C) AIRCRAFT PREFLIGHT - INADEQUATE - PILOT IN COMMAND

Occurrence #2: FORCED LANDING
Phase of Operation: DESCENT - EMERGENCY

Occurrence #3: GEAR NOT EXTENDED
Phase of Operation: LANDING

Findings
3. TERRAIN CONDITION - RUNWAY
4. LANDING GEAR - NOT SELECTED - PILOT IN COMMAND

Factual Information

On December 23, 1993, about 0930 eastern standard time, a Mooney 23E, N31617, piloted by Mr. John Sanford, collided with the terrain during a forced landing at the Linden Airport, Linden, New Jersey. The airplane was substantially damaged, and the pilot was not injured. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed at the time, and no flight plan had been filed. The flight was being conducted under 14 CFR 91.

The airplane had just departed the airport, and at an altitude of 300 feet the airplane's engine lost total power. The pilot elected to land back on the runway with the landing gear retracted.

The FAA took fuel samples and according to FAA Inspector, Victor Roxas's written report, fuel taken from the injectors, "revealed large quantities of water." Fuel samples taken from the gascolater, main fuel lines, aft of the mechanical pump, and the left fuel tank, "...also revealed large quantities of water."

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	**Age:**	27,Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land	**Seat Occupied:**	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	**Restraint Used:**	
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	**Second Pilot Present:**	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	**Toxicology Performed:**	No
Medical Certification:	Class 3 Valid Medical--no waivers/lim.	**Last FAA Medical Exam:**	September 3, 1993
Occupational Pilot:	UNK	**Last Flight Review or Equivalent:**	
Flight Time:	547 hours (Total, all aircraft), 145 hours (Total, this make and model), 547 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 33 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 10 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	MOONEY	**Registration:**	N31617
Model/Series:	20E 20E	**Aircraft Category:**	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		**Amateur Built:**	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	**Serial Number:**	2A3
Landing Gear Type:	Retractable - Tricycle	**Seats:**	4
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	Annual	**Certified Max Gross Wt.:**	2575 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	150 Hrs	**Engines:**	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:		**Engine Manufacturer:**	LYCOMING
ELT:	Installed, not activated	**Engine Model/Series:**	IO-360-A1A
Registered Owner:	TED MEBLAGHLIN	**Rated Power:**	200 Horsepower
Operator:	JOHN SANFORD	**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:**	Night/dark
Observation Facility, Elevation:		**Distance from Accident Site:**	
Observation Time:		**Direction from Accident Site:**	
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	**Visibility**	15 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	**Visibility (RVR):**	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	/	**Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:**	/
Wind Direction:	20°	**Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:**	/
Altimeter Setting:		**Temperature/Dew Point:**	2°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:		**Type of Flight Plan Filed:**	None
Destination:	CHARLESTON , SC (JZI)	**Type of Clearance:**	None
Departure Time:	19:00 Local	**Type of Airspace:**	

Airport Information

Airport:	LINDEN MUNICIPAL LDJ	**Runway Surface Type:**	Asphalt
Airport Elevation:	29 ft msl	**Runway Surface Condition:**	Dry
Runway Used:	9	**IFR Approach:**	
Runway Length/Width:	4139 ft / 75 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):	Yurman, Alan
Additional Participating Persons:	VICTOR ROXAS; TETERBORO , NJ
Original Publish Date:	September 13, 1994
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=38724