



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	ENTERPRISE, Alabama	Accident Number:	ATL99LA096
Date & Time:	May 20, 1999, 19:35 Local	Registration:	N80SH
Aircraft:	RUTAN VERI-EZE	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	1 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The pilot reported that he had forgotten to remove the fuel vent cover during his preflight inspection. Shortly after takeoff the engine lost power and the airplane collided with the ground during a forced landing. Damage consisted of the nose gear, propeller and vertical stabilizer. No mechanical problems with the airplane were reported by the pilot.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The pilot's failure to remove covers from the fuel tank vent which resulted in fuel starvation.

Findings

Occurrence #1: LOSS OF ENGINE POWER
Phase of Operation: TAKEOFF - INITIAL CLIMB

Findings

1. (C) FUEL SYSTEM, VENT - BLOCKED(TOTAL)
2. (C) AIRCRAFT PREFLIGHT - INADEQUATE - PILOT IN COMMAND

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

Occurrence #3: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER

Phase of Operation: EMERGENCY LANDING AFTER TAKEOFF

Findings

3. TERRAIN CONDITION - CROP

Factual Information

On May 20, 1999, at 1935 central daylight time, a Rutan Vari-Eze homebuilt airplane, N80SH, collided with the ground and nosed over shortly after takeoff from the Enterprise Airport, in Enterprise, Alabama. The airplane was operated by the commercial pilot under the provisions of Title 14 CFR Part 91, and visual flight rules. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed and no flight plan was filed for the local flight. The pilot was not injured and the airplane sustained substantial damage. The flight departed Enterprise, Alabama, at 1930.

According to the pilot, he had forgotten to remove the fuel vent cover during his preflight inspection. Shortly after takeoff the engine lost power and the airplane collided with the ground during a forced landing. Damage consisted of the nose gear, propeller and vertical stabilizer.

No mechanical problems with the airplane were reported by the pilot.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial; Flight instructor	Age:	57, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land; Single-engine sea; Multi-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Front
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	Helicopter	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane; Helicopter	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	Airplane multi-engine; Airplane single-engine; Helicopter; Instrument airplane	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 2 Valid Medical--w/ waivers/lim	Last FAA Medical Exam:	July 2, 1998
Occupational Pilot:	UNK	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	3860 hours (Total, all aircraft), 66 hours (Total, this make and model), 3584 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	RUTAN	Registration:	N80SH
Model/Series:	VERI-EZE VERI-EZE	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	Yes
Airworthiness Certificate:	Experimental (Special)	Serial Number:	399
Landing Gear Type:	Tricycle	Seats:	2
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	March 19, 1999 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	1050 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	18 Hrs	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	625 Hrs	Engine Manufacturer:	Continental
ELT:	Installed, not activated	Engine Model/Series:	O-200-A
Registered Owner:	RONALD JACK REYNOLDS	Rated Power:	100 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:	Dusk
Observation Facility, Elevation:	ANB ,612 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	138 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	20:53 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	360°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	/	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	0°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	29 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	16°C / 13°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	(EDN)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:		Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	19:30 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Airport Information

Airport:	ENTERPRISE EDN	Runway Surface Type:	
Airport Elevation:		Runway Surface Condition:	Dry
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:		Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 None	Latitude, Longitude:	31.319871,-85.839714(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Wilson, Butch
Additional Participating Persons:	EDWARD DA SILVA; BIRMINGHAM , AL
Original Publish Date:	June 23, 2000
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=46366

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