



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	KERNVILLE, California	Accident Number:	LAX00LA075
Date & Time:	January 14, 2000, 20:03 Local	Registration:	N2572N
Aircraft:	Piper PA-38-112	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	2 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

During preflight planning, the pilot realized he would need an en route fuel stop due to forecast headwinds. About 45 minutes into the flight, his passenger became agitated and he diverted to an alternate airport in his flight path, which was about 25 miles from his planned fuel stop, to take care of the passenger's concerns. He found that there were no fuel services available at this airport, and in recalculating his flight plan, estimated that he had enough fuel to continue the flight to the destination airport without stopping to refuel at his planned en route fuel stop. He stated that after takeoff from the alternate airport it was becoming dark and he was a stressed out due to mountainous terrain on his flight path, as well as his passenger's discomfort. Approximately 5 miles southeast of the accident airport the pilot informed air traffic control that he was low on fuel. He was provided vectors to the accident airport, which did not have a lighted field. After descending to a lower altitude to locate the airport the engine quit. He switched tanks, and the engine restarted. Approximately 15 seconds later the engine quit again. He saw two cars on a road and landed in-between them. The right wing collided with a road sign during the landing rollout. The fuel tanks were inspected and found to contain residual fuel, with no evidence of leakage.

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 in-flight decision to not refuel the airplane at an en route stop as planned.

Findings

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

Findings

1. (C) FLUID,FUEL - EXHAUSTION
2. (C) IN-FLIGHT PLANNING/DECISION - INADEQUATE - PILOT IN COMMAND
3. (C) REFUELING - NOT PERFORMED - PILOT IN COMMAND

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

Findings

4. TERRAIN CONDITION - MOUNTAINOUS/HILLY
5. LIGHT CONDITION - DARK NIGHT

Occurrence #3: ON GROUND/WATER COLLISION WITH OBJECT
Phase of Operation: LANDING - ROLL

Findings

6. OBJECT - SIGN

Factual Information

On January 14, 2000, at 2003 hours Pacific standard time, a Piper PA-38-112, N2572N, collided with ground obstructions during a forced landing following a loss of engine power near the Kern Valley Airport, Kernville, California. The airplane, rented by the pilot and operated by Mazzie's Flight Service, d.b.a. Golden Eagle Enterprises, Inc., under the provisions of 14 CFR Part 91, sustained substantial damage. The private pilot and passenger were not injured. Visual meteorological conditions existed for the night personal cross-country flight and no flight plan was filed. The flight originated from the Las Vegas airport, Las Vegas, Nevada, at 1600, and was scheduled to terminate at the Fresno, California, airport.

In an interview with a Safety Board investigator, the pilot stated that the flight from Fresno to Las Vegas a few days before the accident was uneventful. He stated that the flight had taken approximately 2 hours with no refueling stops made. The airplane was refueled in Las Vegas on the day of the accident. During his preflight weather briefing the pilot noted that the forecasted head winds were 18-20 knots, and the calculated flight time based on those winds was estimated at 4 hours. The pilot noted that he would not have enough fuel for a nonstop flight and chose Inyokern, California, for a refueling stop. His flight planning included fuel burn, which he estimated to be 6 gallons an hour. After takeoff he noted that his ground speed was 60 mph. The pilot indicated that he did not file a flight plan, but requested flight following.

The pilot reported that approximately 45 minutes into the flight his passenger became agitated and wanted to land. He diverted to Trona, California, approximately 25 nmi northeast of Inyokern, to take care of his passenger. The pilot stated that there were no fuel services available at Trona. He tookoff and continued the flight to Fresno, without stopping at Inyokern to refuel. He stated that it was now dark outside and he was stressed due to mountainous terrain on his flight path, and his passenger's discomfort during the flight.

Prior to reaching Kernville, the pilot reported to the air traffic control facility conducting his flight following that he was low on fuel and could they provide vectors to the nearest airport. The controller informed him that Kern Valley Airport was the closest to his current position, but that they did not have a lighted field. The pilot contacted the airport via Unicom, and the person monitoring Unicom stated that he would place his car at the approach end of the runway and turn his lights on so that the pilot could find the airport.

The pilot descended to 1,000 feet above ground level (agl) to locate the airport. He reported that the engine quit, so he switched to the other tank. Approximately 15 seconds later, the engine quit again. The pilot noted two cars on a road, and made the forced landing in-between them. On the landing rollout the wing of the airplane struck a road sign.

A Federal Aviation Administration inspector examined the airplane. There were no anomalies

noted with the fuel system or fuel tanks, and the system contained only residual fuel. A fuel receipt was obtained from the local refueling company indicating that 18.6 gallons of fuel had been placed onboard the airplane at Las Vegas on the day of the accident.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	26, 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 1 Valid Medical--no waivers/lim.	Last FAA Medical Exam:	August 9, 1999
Occupational Pilot:	UNK	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	117 hours (Total, all aircraft), 100 hours (Total, this make and model), 66 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 23 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 8 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 4 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Piper	Registration:	N2572N
Model/Series:	PA-38-112 PA-38-112	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	38-79A0925
Landing Gear Type:	Tricycle	Seats:	2
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	November 30, 1999 100 hour	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	1670 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	91 Hrs	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	4087 Hrs	Engine Manufacturer:	Lycoming
ELT:	Installed, not activated	Engine Model/Series:	O-235-L2C
Registered Owner:	MAZZIE'S FLYING SERVICE	Rated Power:	112 Horsepower
Operator:		Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None
Operator Does Business As:	GOLDEN EAGLE ENTERPRISES INC.	Operator Designator Code:	

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Night/dark
Observation Facility, Elevation:	BFL ,497 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	41 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	19:56 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	226°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Visibility	8 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	/	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	0°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	13°C / 2°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	TRONA , CA (L72)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	FRESNO , CA (FAT)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	19:30 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Airport Information

Airport:		Runway Surface Type:	
Airport Elevation:		Runway Surface Condition:	
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:	1 None	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	2 None	Latitude, Longitude:	35.730854,-118.390731(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Cornejo, Tealeye
Additional Participating Persons:	DAN BAKER; FRESNO , CA
Original Publish Date:	November 29, 2000
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=48546

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](#).