



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	THIBODAUX, Louisiana	Accident Number:	FTW00LA162
Date & Time:	June 1, 2000, 08:20 Local	Registration:	N5028Q
Aircraft:	Air Tractor AT-401B	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	1 Serious
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 137: Agricultural		

Analysis

The pilot flew the agricultural airplane around the target area (crawfish pond) to be sprayed, 'looking for obstacles and wind direction.' The pilot made the first spray run from the north to the south, and the second pass from the south to north. After completing the second run, the pilot passed over power lines and executed a turn to the right and into the direction of the sun. According to the pilot, the sunlight and glare on the windscreen 'blocked my vision' temporarily. While still in the turn, the pilot regained 'forward vision' and realized the airplane was flying 'into the power lines.' After striking the power lines, the airplane came to rest upright in the crawfish pond.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The pilot's failure to maintain clearance with the power lines while maneuvering during an aerial application flight. A factor was the sunglare on the windscreen.

Findings

Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH OBJECT
Phase of Operation: MANEUVERING - AERIAL APPLICATION

Findings

1. OBJECT - WIRE, TRANSMISSION

2. (C) CLEARANCE - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND
3. (F) LIGHT CONDITION - SUNGLARE

Factual Information

On June 1, 2000, at 0820 central daylight time, an Air Tractor AT-401B agricultural airplane, N5028Q, struck a power line during an aerial application flight near Thibodaux, Louisiana. The airplane was owned and operated by Golden Ranch Aviation, Inc., of Schriever, Louisiana, under 14 Code of Federal Regulations Part 137. The commercial pilot, sole occupant, received serious injuries, and the airplane sustained substantial damage. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed for the local flight, and a flight plan was not filed. The flight originated approximately 0800 from the Golden Ranch Aviation, Inc., private airstrip.

According to the pilot's statement, the pilot circled the target area (a crawfish pond, located approximately 10-12 miles northwest of the airstrip) to be sprayed, "looking for obstacles and wind direction." The pilot made the first spray run from the north to the south, and the second pass from the south to north. After completing the second run, the pilot passed over power lines and executed a turn to the right and into the direction of the sun. According to the pilot, the sunlight and glare on the windscreen "blocked [his] vision" temporarily. While still in the turn, the pilot regained "forward vision" and realized the airplane was flying "into the power lines." After striking the power lines, the airplane came to rest upright in the crawfish pond.

According to the U.S. Naval Observatory Astronomical Applications Department, the official sunrise on June 1, 2000, occurred at 0603.

According to the FAA inspector, who examined the wreckage, the wings sustained spar damage, and the propeller was damaged.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial	Age:	53, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Center
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 2 Valid Medical-w/ waivers/lim	Last FAA Medical Exam:	March 3, 2000
Occupational Pilot:	Yes	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	12600 hours (Total, all aircraft), 1100 hours (Total, this make and model), 12544 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Air Tractor	Registration:	N5028Q
Model/Series:	AT-401B AT-401B	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Restricted (Special)	Serial Number:	401B-1028
Landing Gear Type:	Tailwheel	Seats:	1
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	December 21, 1999 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	7800 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	5 Hrs	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	535 Hrs	Engine Manufacturer:	P&W
ELT:		Engine Model/Series:	R1340-AN
Registered Owner:	GOLDEN RANCH AVIATION, INC.	Rated Power:	600 Horsepower
Operator:		Operating Certificate(s) Held:	
Operator Does Business As:		Operator Designator Code:	G6HG

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:		Distance from Accident Site:	
Observation Time:		Direction from Accident Site:	
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:		Temperature/Dew Point:	29°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	SCHRIEVER , LA (NONE)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:		Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	08:00 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class E

Airport Information

Airport:		Runway Surface Type:	
Airport Elevation:		Runway Surface Condition:	
Runway Used:	0	IFR Approach:	
Runway Length/Width:		VFR Approach/Landing:	

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Serious	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:		Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 Serious	Latitude, Longitude:	29.789297,-90.81932(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Roach, Joyce
Additional Participating Persons:	KELLY L TEAGUE; BATON ROUGE , LA
Original Publish Date:	December 4, 2000
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	The NTSB traveled to the scene of this accident.
Investigation Docket:	https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=49327

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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](#).