



# Aviation Investigation Final Report

<b>Location:</b>	Apple Valley, California	<b>Accident Number:</b>	LAX01LA184
<b>Date &amp; Time:</b>	May 18, 2001, 14:00 Local	<b>Registration:</b>	N1606B
<b>Aircraft:</b>	Luscombe 11A	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Substantial
<b>Defining Event:</b>		<b>Injuries:</b>	2 Minor
<b>Flight Conducted Under:</b>	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

## Analysis

The airplane made a forced landing on a dirt road due to a loss of engine power. The landing gear was sheared off, and both wings were damaged on the landing rollout. The personal cross-country flight had departed about 2.5 hours prior to the accident. Responding personnel looked in the fuel tanks, and the surrounding area, and did not see or smell any fuel.

## Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The pilot's fuel mismanagement, which led to fuel exhaustion, a loss of engine power, and subsequent landing on unsuitable terrain.

### Findings

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

#### Findings

1. (F) FLUID,FUEL - EXHAUSTION
  2. (C) FUEL MANAGEMENT - IMPROPER - PILOT IN COMMAND
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Occurrence #2: FORCED LANDING  
Phase of Operation: EMERGENCY DESCENT/LANDING

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Occurrence #3: ON GROUND/WATER ENCOUNTER WITH TERRAIN/WATER  
Phase of Operation: LANDING - ROLL

Findings

3. TERRAIN CONDITION - ROUGH/UNEVEN
4. TERRAIN CONDITION - NONE SUITABLE

## Factual Information

On May 18, 2001, at 1400 hours Pacific daylight time (PDT), a Luscombe 11A, N1606B, sustained substantial damage when it was force landed near Apple Valley, California. The forced landing was precipitated by a loss of engine power during cruise. The airplane was operated by the airline transport pilot/owner under the provisions of 14 CFR Part 91, and sustained substantial damage. The pilot and his pilot-rated passenger sustained minor injuries. The personal cross-country flight departed Glendale, Arizona, at 1130 PDT. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed, and no flight plan had been filed. The flight was scheduled to terminate at the Columbia Airport, Columbia, California.

According to the pilot's written statement to the Safety Board, he stated that there were no discrepancies noted with the preflight inspection, takeoff, climb, and cruise portions of the flight. He indicated that he checked fuel and time over Twenty-Nine Palms, California, and asked the Los Angeles Air Route Traffic Control Center (ARTCC) air traffic controller how far he was from Apple Valley. ARTCC informed him he was 18 miles away.

The pilot reported that it was his intention to land at Apple Valley for fuel and lunch. He started his descent from 8,500 msl to 6,500 feet msl, where he encountered light to moderate turbulence. He noted that the fuel gage was fluctuating, which indicated to him that the fuel was sloshing around in the tank. The pilot reported that the engine quit. He suspected that the fuel line had been uncovered and air had gotten into the fuel line causing vapor lock. He "pumped" the throttle "thinking I might get the fuel moving back into the carburetor to get the engine started again." He stated that he picked a place to land after his unsuccessful attempt to restart the engine. He chose a small dirt road; he indicated that his only problem was a paved road with poles that was parallel to the dirt road. He setup for the forced landing. At 20 mph he pushed the airplane's nose over to land in a level attitude with some forward movement. The pilot stated that he did this to lessen the downward direction of the airplane and to slow it down enough to be able to stop before hitting the poles.

According to a Federal Aviation Administration inspector, controllers from ARTCC were providing the pilot with flight following. The pilot informed the ARTCC controller that he was out of fuel and would be making a forced landing.

A responding San Bernardino Sheriff's Department deputy stated that he observed no fuel in either of the airplane's fuel tanks or on the ground beneath the airplane. He also stated that the airplane's wings showed indications of brushing against vegetation, and were damaged. The propeller was bent at the tips, and the landing gear had been sheared off.

## Pilot Information

<b>Certificate:</b>	Airline transport; Commercial	<b>Age:</b>	54, Male
<b>Airplane Rating(s):</b>	Single-engine land; Multi-engine land	<b>Seat Occupied:</b>	Left
<b>Other Aircraft Rating(s):</b>	Helicopter	<b>Restraint Used:</b>	
<b>Instrument Rating(s):</b>	Airplane; Helicopter	<b>Second Pilot Present:</b>	Yes
<b>Instructor Rating(s):</b>	None	<b>Toxicology Performed:</b>	No
<b>Medical Certification:</b>	Class 1 Valid Medical--no waivers/lim.	<b>Last FAA Medical Exam:</b>	December 3, 2000
<b>Occupational Pilot:</b>	UNK	<b>Last Flight Review or Equivalent:</b>	March 8, 2000
<b>Flight Time:</b>	16000 hours (Total, all aircraft), 30 hours (Total, this make and model), 8000 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 30 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 5 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft)		

## Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

<b>Aircraft Make:</b>	Luscombe	<b>Registration:</b>	N1606B
<b>Model/Series:</b>	11A	<b>Aircraft Category:</b>	Airplane
<b>Year of Manufacture:</b>		<b>Amateur Built:</b>	
<b>Airworthiness Certificate:</b>	Normal	<b>Serial Number:</b>	11-115
<b>Landing Gear Type:</b>	Tailwheel	<b>Seats:</b>	4
<b>Date/Type of Last Inspection:</b>	May 15, 2000 Annual	<b>Certified Max Gross Wt.:</b>	2300 lbs
<b>Time Since Last Inspection:</b>	30 Hrs	<b>Engines:</b>	1 Reciprocating
<b>Airframe Total Time:</b>	1510 Hrs as of last inspection	<b>Engine Manufacturer:</b>	Continental
<b>ELT:</b>	Installed, not activated	<b>Engine Model/Series:</b>	E-185-11
<b>Registered Owner:</b>	Joseph and John Drexler	<b>Rated Power:</b>	118 Horsepower
<b>Operator:</b>	John Drexler	<b>Operating Certificate(s) Held:</b>	None

## Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

<b>Conditions at Accident Site:</b>	Visual (VMC)	<b>Condition of Light:</b>	Day
<b>Observation Facility, Elevation:</b>	KDAG,1927 ft msl	<b>Distance from Accident Site:</b>	30 Nautical Miles
<b>Observation Time:</b>	13:54 Local	<b>Direction from Accident Site:</b>	20°
<b>Lowest Cloud Condition:</b>	Clear	<b>Visibility</b>	10 miles
<b>Lowest Ceiling:</b>	None	<b>Visibility (RVR):</b>	
<b>Wind Speed/Gusts:</b>	14 knots / 19 knots	<b>Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:</b>	/
<b>Wind Direction:</b>	260°	<b>Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:</b>	/
<b>Altimeter Setting:</b>	29.76 inches Hg	<b>Temperature/Dew Point:</b>	34°C / -2°C
<b>Precipitation and Obscuration:</b>	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
<b>Departure Point:</b>	Glendale, AZ (GEU )	<b>Type of Flight Plan Filed:</b>	None
<b>Destination:</b>	Apple Valley, CA (APV )	<b>Type of Clearance:</b>	VFR flight following
<b>Departure Time:</b>	11:30 Local	<b>Type of Airspace:</b>	Class G

## Airport Information

<b>Airport:</b>	APPLE VALLEY APV	<b>Runway Surface Type:</b>	
<b>Airport Elevation:</b>	3059 ft msl	<b>Runway Surface Condition:</b>	Unknown
<b>Runway Used:</b>		<b>IFR Approach:</b>	None
<b>Runway Length/Width:</b>		<b>VFR Approach/Landing:</b>	Forced landing

## Wreckage and Impact Information

<b>Crew Injuries:</b>	1 Minor	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Substantial
<b>Passenger Injuries:</b>	1 Minor	<b>Aircraft Fire:</b>	None
<b>Ground Injuries:</b>	N/A	<b>Aircraft Explosion:</b>	None
<b>Total Injuries:</b>	2 Minor	<b>Latitude, Longitude:</b>	34.431945,-116.921112

## Administrative Information

<b>Investigator In Charge (IIC):</b>	Petterson, G.
<b>Additional Participating Persons:</b>	DANIEL BAKER; FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION; RIVERSIDE, CA
<b>Original Publish Date:</b>	January 23, 2002
<b>Last Revision Date:</b>	
<b>Investigation Class:</b>	<a href="#">Class</a>
<b>Note:</b>	The NTSB traveled to the scene of this accident.
<b>Investigation Docket:</b>	<a href="https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=52307">https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=52307</a>

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](#).