



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Fredericksburg, Texas	Accident Number:	FTW02LA083
Date & Time:	February 21, 2002, 13:00 Local	Registration:	N71546
Aircraft:	North American T28C	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	1 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The pilot reported that prior to a day cross-country flight, the airplane was topped with 155 gallons of fuel, and subsequently, flown for 1 hour 25 minutes to the next destination. The airplane was not fueled at that destination, and the flight departed for the subsequent destination. During the descent, the engine lost total power approximately 4 nautical miles east of the destination airport. The pilot landed the airplane in a rough field. The FAA inspector, who responded to the site, drained approximately 12 ounces of fuel from the airplane. The integrity of the fuel system was not compromised.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: the failure of the pilot to refuel the airplane resulting in fuel exhaustion. A contributing factor was the lack of suitable terrain for the forced landing.

Findings

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

Findings

1. (C) FLUID,FUEL - EXHAUSTION
2. (C) REFUELING - NOT PERFORMED - PILOT IN COMMAND

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

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

Findings

- 3. (F) TERRAIN CONDITION - NONE SUITABLE
- 4. TERRAIN CONDITION - ROUGH/UNEVEN

Factual Information

On February 21, 2002, at 1300 central standard time, a North American T28C, N71546, sustained substantial damage during a forced landing following a loss of engine power near Fredericksburg, Texas. The commercial pilot, sole occupant, was not injured. The airplane was owned by a private individual and operated under 14 Code of Federal Regulations Part 91. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed for the cross-country flight, and a flight plan was not filed. The personal flight originated from Caldwell, Texas, at 1220.

On the Pilot/Operator Aircraft Accident Report (NTSB Form 6120.1/2), the pilot reported that the airplane was topped with 155 gallons of fuel at Levelland, Texas. Subsequently, the airplane was flown cross-country for 1 hour 25 minutes to the destination of Caldwell, Texas. The airplane was not fueled at Caldwell, and the flight departed for Fredericksburg. During the descent to the Fredericksburg Gillespie County Airport, the engine lost total power. The pilot landed the airplane, gear retracted, in a rough field approximately 4 nautical miles east of the destination airport. Substantial damage occurred to the firewall, cowling, and fuselage. The engine and propeller were damaged.

The FAA inspector, who responded to the site, found the airplane resting upright with structural damage to the firewall and the lower fuselage. The FAA inspector drained approximately 12 ounces of fuel from the airplane. The integrity of the fuel system was not compromised.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial	Age:	32, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land; Multi-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Front
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 2 Valid Medical-w/ waivers/lim	Last FAA Medical Exam:	June 12, 2001
Occupational Pilot:	UNK	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	1315 hours (Total, all aircraft), 264 hours (Total, this make and model), 1227 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 21 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 3 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	North American	Registration:	N71546
Model/Series:	T28C	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Experimental (Special)	Serial Number:	140528
Landing Gear Type:	Retractable - Tricycle	Seats:	2
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	February 20, 2002 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	12000 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	2 Hrs	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	8799.4 Hrs at time of accident	Engine Manufacturer:	Lycoming (Curtis-Wright)
ELT:	Not installed	Engine Model/Series:	R1820-103A86A
Registered Owner:	Gordon B. Richardson	Rated Power:	1475 Horsepower
Operator:	Gordon B. Richardson II	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

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:	12 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	360°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:		Temperature/Dew Point:	16°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Caldwell, TX (14R)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	Fredericksburg, TX (T82)	Type of Clearance:	Traffic advisory
Departure Time:	12:20 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Airport Information

Airport:	Fredericksburg T28	Runway Surface Type:	Dirt
Airport Elevation:	1695 ft msl	Runway Surface Condition:	Rough
Runway Used:		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:	30.24361,-98.909446

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Roach, Joyce
Additional Participating Persons:	Ramon Barrera; Federal Aviation Administration; San Antonio, TX
Original Publish Date:	April 8, 2003
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=54237

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](#).