Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Hammond, Louisiana	**Accident Number:**	DFW06LA097
Date & Time:	April 7, 2006, 15:00 Local	**Registration:**	N724TL
Aircraft:	Rocket Flyers Turbine Legend	**Aircraft Damage:**	Substantial
Defining Event:		**Injuries:**	1 Serious
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The single-engine turbo-prop powered experimental airplane experienced a hard landing during a forced landing following a reported loss of engine power. While approaching to land, the airplane's nose landing gear would not extend. The 23,240-hour airline transport rated pilot departed the traffic pattern and repeatedly attempted to extend the nose landing gear to no avail. The pilot then elected to return to the airport with the intention of touching down on the airplane's main landing gear in an attempt to jar the nose landing gear down. While on final approach, at an altitude of 100 to 200 feet above ground level (AGL), the engine reportedly lost complete power. The pilot elected to execute a forced landing to a field short of the airport. The reason for the reported loss of engine power and failure of the nose landing gear to extend could not be determined.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The reported loss of engine power for undetermined reasons. A contributing factor was the lack of suitable terrain for the forced landing.

Findings

Occurrence #1: AIRFRAME/COMPONENT/SYSTEM FAILURE/MALFUNCTION
Phase of Operation: APPROACH

Findings

1. GEAR EXTENSION - NOT SUCCESSFUL - PILOT IN COMMAND

Occurrence #2: LOSS OF ENGINE POWER
Phase of Operation: APPROACH

Findings
2. (C) REASON FOR OCCURRENCE UNDETERMINED

Occurrence #3: FORCED LANDING
Phase of Operation: EMERGENCY LANDING

Occurrence #4: HARD LANDING
Phase of Operation: EMERGENCY LANDING

Findings
3. (F) TERRAIN CONDITION - NONE SUITABLE

Factual Information

On April 7, 2006, about 1500 central daylight time, a single-engine Rocket Flyers Turbine Legend turbo-prop experimental airplane, N724TL, was substantially damaged during a forced landing following a loss of engine power while on final approach to the Hammond Regional Airport (HDC), near Hammond, Louisiana. The airline transport rated pilot, sole occupant of the experimental airplane, was seriously injured. The airplane was registered to Rocket Flyers LLC and operated by the pilot. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed and an instrument flight rules (IFR) flight plan was filed for the 14 Code of Federal Regulations Part 91 personal flight. The cross-country flight originated from the DeLand Municipal Airport (DED), near DeLand, Florida, with Austin-Bergstrom International Airport (AUS), near Austin, Texas, as the final destination.

According to the 23,240-hour pilot, while approaching HDC to land, the airplane's nose landing gear would not extend. The pilot departed the traffic pattern to attempt to extend the nose landing gear to no avail. The pilot then elected to return to the airport with the intention of touching down on the airplane's main landing gear in an attempt "to jar the nose landing gear down." While on final approach for Runway 18, while at 100 to 200 feet above ground level (AGL), the engine reportedly lost complete power. The pilot elected to land in an open field short of the airport. The airplane landed hard before coming to rest in an upright position.

A Federal Aviation Administration inspector responded to the accident site and reported that the airplane's lower fuselage and wings sustained structural damage. According to the inspector, the reason for the reported loss of engine power could not be determined. The airplane was powered by a single 725-horsepower Walter 601D engine.

The pilot further reported that maintenance personnel had reinstalled the cowling prior to the accident flight. He suspected that the cowling was installed incorrectly which resulted in the failure of the nose landing gear to extend. When asked how this accident could have been prevented, the pilot stated that "one would consider a more thorough pre-flight."

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Airline transport; Commercial; Flight engineer	**Age:**	59,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 1 Without waivers/limitations	**Last FAA Medical Exam:**	March 1, 2006
Occupational Pilot:	Yes	**Last Flight Review or Equivalent:**	March 1, 2006
Flight Time:	23240 hours (Total, all aircraft), 120 hours (Total, this make and model), 14000 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 210 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 5 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Rocket Flyers	**Registration:**	N724TL
Model/Series:	Turbine Legend	**Aircraft Category:**	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		**Amateur Built:**	Yes
Airworthiness Certificate:	Experimental (Special)	**Serial Number:**	7
Landing Gear Type:	Retractable - Tricycle	**Seats:**	2
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	April 1, 2006 Continuous airworthiness	**Certified Max Gross Wt.:**	3588 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		**Engines:**	1 Turbo prop
Airframe Total Time:	120 Hrs at time of accident	**Engine Manufacturer:**	Walter
ELT:	Installed, not activated	**Engine Model/Series:**	601D
Registered Owner:	Rocket Flyers LLC	**Rated Power:**	725 Horsepower
Operator:		**Operating Certificate(s) Held:**	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	**Condition of Light:**	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	KHDC,46 ft msl	**Distance from Accident Site:**	1 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	15:04 Local	**Direction from Accident Site:**	180°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Scattered / 4700 ft AGL	**Visibility**	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	**Visibility (RVR):**	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	15 knots / 22 knots	**Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:**	/
Wind Direction:	190°	**Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:**	/
Altimeter Setting:	29.78 inches Hg	**Temperature/Dew Point:**	30°C / 17°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	DELAND, FL (DED)	**Type of Flight Plan Filed:**	None
Destination:	HAMMOND, LA (HDC)	**Type of Clearance:**	VFR;VFR flight following
Departure Time:	16:30 Local	**Type of Airspace:**	

Airport Information

Airport:	Hammond Northshore Regional HDC	**Runway Surface Type:**	Asphalt
Airport Elevation:	46 ft msl	**Runway Surface Condition:**	Dry
Runway Used:	18	**IFR Approach:**	None
Runway Length/Width:	5001 ft / 150 ft	**VFR Approach/Landing:**	Forced landing;Straight-in

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:**	30.521389,-90.418334

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	LeBaron, Timothy
Additional Participating Persons:	Laurel Johnson; Federal Aviation Administration; Baton Rouge, LA
Original Publish Date:	October 3, 2006
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=63458