Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Jennings, Louisiana	**Accident Number:**	DFW06LA135
Date & Time:	May 20, 2006, 18:30 Local	**Registration:**	N58072
Aircraft:	Boeing A75	**Aircraft Damage:**	Substantial
Defining Event:		**Injuries:**	2 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

Shortly after takeoff, the vintage biplane's radial engine lost partial power and the pilot was unable to maintain altitude. During the emergency descent, the 4,900-hour commercial pilot elected to turn the airplane towards an open field. In an attempt to avoid a "tall" fence, the airplane experienced a hard landing. There was no postimpact fire and the pilot and passenger were able to egress the airplane unassisted. An examination of the airplane's engine and fuel system revealed no preimpact anomalies. The reason for the partial loss of engine power could not be determined.

Probable Cause and Findings

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

Findings

Occurrence #1: LOSS OF ENGINE POWER
Phase of Operation: TAKEOFF - INITIAL CLIMB

Findings
1. (C) REASON FOR OCCURRENCE UNDETERMINED

Occurrence #2: FORCED LANDING

Phase of Operation: DESCENT - EMERGENCY

Occurrence #3: HARD LANDING
Phase of Operation: EMERGENCY DESCENT/LANDING

Occurrence #4: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER
Phase of Operation: DESCENT - UNCONTROLLED

Findings
2. TERRAIN CONDITION - GROUND
3. (F) TERRAIN CONDITION - NONE SUITABLE

Factual Information

On May 20, 2006, about 1830 central daylight time, a single-engine Boeing A75 tailwheel-equipped biplane, N58072, was substantially damaged during a hard landing following a partial loss of engine power shortly after takeoff from the Jennings Airport (3R7), near Jennings, Louisiana. The commercial pilot and the sole passenger were not injured. The vintage airplane was registered to and operated by the pilot. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed and a flight plan was not filed for the 14 Code of Federal Regulations Part 91 personal flight. The local flight was originating at the time of the accident.

The 4,900-houor commercial pilot reported that shortly after takeoff from Runway 17, (a 2,000-foot-long by 150-foot-wide grass runway), the 220-horsepower radial engine sustained a partial loss of power. The pilot was unable to maintain altitude and elected to land to an open field. As the pilot was attempting to avoid a "tall" fence, the airplane experienced a hard landing. There was no postimpact fire and the pilot and passenger were able to egress the airplane unassisted.

The pilot further reported that as a result of the hard landing the fuselage was twisted and the lower left wing's main spar was broken.

A representative from the NTSB examined the airplane at Air Salvage of Dallas, near Lancaster, Texas. An examination of the airplane's gravity fed fuel system revealed that the single 46-gallon fuel tank contained approximately 12 gallons of a blue liquid consistent with 100 Low Lead aviation fuel. The engine primer was found in the "in and locked" position. The fuel tank vent was found unobstructed. The fuel selector valve was tested and found to be operational. Both of the wooden propeller blades were splintered and destroyed from midspan outward.

The front spark plugs were removed and no anomalies were noted. Thumb compression was obtained in each cylinder by rotating the engine via its propeller. Valve train continuity was established to all valves and to the accessory gears. Both engine magnetos' produced spark when rotated by hand. The engine oil screen was removed and no visible metal particles or obstructions were observed. The fuel gascolator screen was found clean and unobstructed. The engine carburetor was removed and disassembled. The carburetor float did not contain liquid and no anomalies were noted with the needle and seat. No anomalies were found with either the airframe or the engine that could have prevented normal flight.

A review of the carburetor icing chart by the Investigator In Charge (IIC) revealed that, at the time of the accident, conditions were not conducive for carburetor icing at takeoff power. The reason for the reported loss of engine power could not be determined.

At 1755, the weather observation facility at Chennault International Airport (CWF), near Lake

Charles, Louisiana, located 25 nautical miles west from the site of the accident, was reporting the wind from 220 degrees at 13 knots, visibility 10 statute miles, clear of clouds, temperature 80 degrees Fahrenheit, dew point 57 degrees Fahrenheit, humidity 45 percent, and a barometric pressure setting of 29.96 inches of Mercury.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial	**Age:**	74,Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land; Single-engine sea; Multi-engine land	**Seat Occupied:**	Rear
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 3 With waivers/limitations	**Last FAA Medical Exam:**	August 1, 2004
Occupational Pilot:	No	**Last Flight Review or Equivalent:**	
Flight Time:	4900 hours (Total, all aircraft), 300 hours (Total, this make and model), 4800 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 35 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 15 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 4 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Boeing	**Registration:**	N58072
Model/Series:	A75	**Aircraft Category:**	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		**Amateur Built:**	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Aerobatic	**Serial Number:**	75-596
Landing Gear Type:	Tailwheel	**Seats:**	2
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	May 1, 2006 Annual	**Certified Max Gross Wt.:**	3520 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		**Engines:**	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:		**Engine Manufacturer:**	Continental
ELT:	Installed, activated, did not aid in locating accident	**Engine Model/Series:**	W670
Registered Owner:	On file	**Rated Power:**	200 Horsepower
Operator:	On file	**Operating Certificate(s) Held:**	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	**Condition of Light:**	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	CWF	**Distance from Accident Site:**	25 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	17:55 Local	**Direction from Accident Site:**	270°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	**Visibility**	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	**Visibility (RVR):**	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	13 knots /	**Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:**	/
Wind Direction:	220°	**Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:**	/
Altimeter Setting:	29.95 inches Hg	**Temperature/Dew Point:**	27°C / 14°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	JENNINGS, LA (3R7)	**Type of Flight Plan Filed:**	None
Destination:		**Type of Clearance:**	None
Departure Time:	18:30 Local	**Type of Airspace:**	

Airport Information

Airport:	JENNINGS 3R7	**Runway Surface Type:**	Grass/turf
Airport Elevation:	23 ft msl	**Runway Surface Condition:**	Dry
Runway Used:	17	**IFR Approach:**	None
Runway Length/Width:	2000 ft / 150 ft	**VFR Approach/Landing:**	None

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:**	

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	LeBaron, Timothy
Additional Participating Persons:	Laurel Johnson; Federal Aviation Administration; Baton Rouge, LA
Original Publish Date:	October 31, 2006
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=63720