



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Final Report

Location:	STATESVILLE, NC	Accident Number:	ATL94LA089
Date & Time:	05/01/1994, 1545 EDT	Registration:	N41ES
Aircraft:	HESTERLEE RUTAN VARI EZE	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	1 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

Analysis

DURING THE INITIAL CLIMB AFTER TAKEOFF, THE ENGINE QUIT. A FORCED LANDING WAS ATTEMPTED, WHICH RESULTED IN A COLLISION WITH A DITCH AS THE PILOT ATTEMPTED TO RE-LAND ON THE REMAINDER OF THE DEPARTURE RUNWAY. THE PILOT REPORTED THAT HE MOVED THE FUEL SELECTOR FROM THE AUXILIARY TANK POSITION TO THE OFF POSITION INSTEAD OF THE MAIN TANK POSITION.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The pilot's improper positioning of the fuel selector, which resulted in fuel starvation during the initial climb after takeoff. A factor was a ditch adjacent to the runway.

Findings

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

Findings

1. (C) FLUID,FUEL - STARVATION
2. (C) FUEL TANK SELECTOR POSITION - IMPROPER - PILOT IN COMMAND

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

Occurrence #3: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER
Phase of Operation: DESCENT - EMERGENCY

Findings

3. (F) TERRAIN CONDITION - DITCH

Factual Information

On May 1, 1994, about 1545 eastern daylight time, a Hesterlee Rutan Vari Eze, N41ES, collided with the ground during a forced landing at Statesville, North Carolina. The airplane was operated by the pilot under 14 CFR Part 91, and visual flight rules. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed. A flight plan was not filed for the personal flight. there were no injuries to the private pilot, and the airplane was substantially damaged. The flight was originating at the time of the accident.

The pilot believed that he inadvertently turned the fuel selector from the auxiliary tank position to the off position, instead of the main fuel tank position. During the initial climb after takeoff, the engine quit. A forced landing was attempted which resulted in a collision with a ditch, as the pilot tried to re-land on the runway.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	32, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine Land	Seat Occupied:	Front
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	Seatbelt, Shoulder harness
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	Airplane Single-engine; None	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 2 Valid Medical--w/ waivers/lim.	Last FAA Medical Exam:	12/03/1993
Occupational Pilot:		Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	1535 hours (Total, all aircraft), 69 hours (Total, this make and model), 333 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 70 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 29 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 2 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	HESTERLEE	Registration:	N41ES
Model/Series:	RUTAN VARI EZE RUTAN VARI	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	Yes
Airworthiness Certificate:	Experimental	Serial Number:	676
Landing Gear Type:		Seats:	2
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	09/27/1993, Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	1110 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	40 Hours	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	909 Hours	Engine Manufacturer:	CONTINENTAL
ELT:	Installed, activated, did not aid in locating accident	Engine Model/Series:	O-200
Registered Owner:	STAMPER, EDWARD K., JR.	Rated Power:	100 hp
Operator:	STAMPER, EDWARD K., JR.	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual Conditions	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	, 0 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	0 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	1545	Direction from Accident Site:	0°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Scattered / 6500 ft agl	Visibility	15 Miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None / 0 ft agl	Visibility (RVR):	0 ft
Wind Speed/Gusts:	5 knots / 8 knots	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	190°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	29 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	21° C / 6° C
Precipitation and Obscuration:			
Departure Point:		Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	ASHEBORO, NC (W44)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	1545 EDT	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Airport Information

Airport:	STATESVILLE MUNICIPAL (SVH)	Runway Surface Type:	Asphalt
Airport Elevation:	965 ft	Runway Surface Condition:	Dry
Runway Used:	28	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:	5004 ft / 100 ft	VFR Approach/Landing:	Forced Landing

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 None	Latitude, Longitude:	

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	PRESTON E HICKS,	Report Date:	02/24/1995
Additional Participating Persons:	JANE LAMBERT; WINSTON-SALEM, NC		
Publish Date:			
Investigation Docket:	NTSB accident and incident dockets serve as permanent archival information for the NTSB's investigations. Dockets released prior to June 1, 2009 are publicly available from the NTSB's Record Management Division at pubinq@ntsb.gov , or at 800-877-6799. Dockets released after this date are available at http://dms.nts.gov/pubdms/ .		

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