



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Final Report

Location:	LANCASTER, CA	Accident Number:	LAX95LA070
Date & Time:	01/01/1995, 1710 PST	Registration:	N200AW
Aircraft:	AERO COMMANDER 200D	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	1 Fatal, 2 Serious, 1 None

Flight Conducted Under: Part 91: General Aviation - Personal

Analysis

THE PILOT AND HIS THREE PASSENGERS WERE ON A CROSS-COUNTRY FLIGHT WHEN THEY EXPERIENCED A LOSS OF ENGINE POWER. THE PILOT WAS ATTEMPTING A FORCED LANDING ON A ROAD WHEN A CAR GOT IN THE WAY. THE PILOT THEN SET UP TO LAND IN A DESERT AREA ADJACENT TO THE ROAD. THE AIRCRAFT LANDED HARD AND SHEARED OFF THE LANDING GEAR. A FAA INSPECTOR FOUND THAT THE FUEL SELECTOR VALVE WAS POSITIONED TO A FUEL TANK THAT WAS EMPTY. THE OTHER THREE FUEL TANKS WERE FULL OF FUEL. THE FUEL PUMP FUNCTIONED NORMALLY WHEN ACTIVATED WITH AIRCRAFT BATTERY POWER, AND THE FUEL SELECTOR WAS POSITIONED TO A TANK CONTAINING FUEL. NO FUEL WAS FOUND IN THE FUEL LINES FROM THE FIREWALL TO THE FUEL PUMP. THE ENGINE WAS REMOVED FROM THE AIRCRAFT AND INSTALLED IN A TEST CELL. THE ENGINE STARTED WITHOUT HESITATION AND WAS EXERCISED THROUGHOUT ITS NORMAL POWER RANGE.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: fuel starvation due to the pilot's failure to select a tank containing fuel.

Findings

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

Findings

1. (C) FLUID,FUEL - STARVATION
2. (C) FUEL MANAGEMENT - IMPROPER - PILOT IN COMMAND
3. (C) FUEL SUPPLY - NOT SELECTED - PILOT IN COMMAND

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

Occurrence #3: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER
Phase of Operation: LANDING - FLARE/TOUCHDOWN

Factual Information

On January 1, 1995, at 1710 Pacific standard time, an Aero Commander 200D, N200AW, collided with the ground during a forced landing attempt in a rural area of Lancaster, California. The forced landing was precipitated by a loss of engine power. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed at the time and no flight plan was filed for the operation. The aircraft incurred substantial damage. The pilot sustained serious injuries in the accident and died in a hospital on January 18, 1995. Two of the three passengers incurred minor injuries, while one passenger was not injured. The flight originated at Apple Valley, California, on the day of the accident at 1630 as a personal flight to Rosamond, California.

In an oral statement to responding Los Angeles County sheriff's deputies, the pilot said the engine quit and he was attempting a forced landing on a road when a car got in the way. The pilot then set up to land in a desert area adjacent to the road. The aircraft landed hard and sheared off the landing gear.

A Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) inspector from the Van Nuys Flight Standards District Office responded to the scene. He reported that the fuel selector valve was positioned to a right wing fuel tank which was found to be empty. The three remaining fuel tanks in the aircraft were full of fuel. The fuel pump functioned normally when activated with aircraft battery power, and the fuel selector was positioned to a tank containing fuel. No fuel was found in the fuel lines from the firewall to the fuel pump.

The engine was removed from the aircraft and sent to the Teledyne Continental factory, where it was installed in a test cell under the supervision of FAA inspectors. The engine started without hesitation and was exercised throughout its normal power range.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	63, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine Land	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	Seatbelt
Instrument Rating(s):	None	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	Yes
Medical Certification:	Class 3 Valid Medical--w/ waivers/lim.	Last FAA Medical Exam:	08/02/1993
Occupational Pilot:		Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	450 hours (Total, all aircraft), 5 hours (Total, this make and model)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	AERO COMMANDER	Registration:	N200AW
Model/Series:	200D 200D	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	No
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	383
Landing Gear Type:	Retractable - Tricycle	Seats:	4
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	06/04/1993, Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	3000 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	29 Hours	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	1330 Hours	Engine Manufacturer:	Continental
ELT:	Installed	Engine Model/Series:	IO-520-A
Registered Owner:	DAVID L. WHITE	Rated Power:	285 hp
Operator:	DAVID L. WHITE	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual Conditions	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	WJF, 2347 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	8 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	1646 PST	Direction from Accident Site:	0°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Scattered / 10000 ft agl	Visibility	40 Miles
Lowest Ceiling:	Broken / 25000 ft agl	Visibility (RVR):	0 ft
Wind Speed/Gusts:	5 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	70°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	9° C
Precipitation and Obscuration:			
Departure Point:	APPLE VALLEY, CA (APV)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	ROSAMOND, CA (L00)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	1655 PST	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Fatal	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	2 Serious, 1 None	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 Fatal, 2 Serious, 1 None	Latitude, Longitude:	

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC): JEFF RICH Report Date: 08/31/1995

Additional Participating Persons: DICK WOLF; VAN NUYS, CA

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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The Independent Safety Board Act, as codified at 49 U.S.C. Section 1154(b), precludes the admission into evidence or use of any part of an NTSB report related to an incident or accident in a civil action for damages resulting from a matter mentioned in the report. A factual report that may be admissible under 49 U.S.C. § 1154(b) is available [here](#).