



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Final Report

Location:	HOT SPRINGS, AR	Accident Number:	FTW00LA247
Date & Time:	09/01/2000, 1538 CDT	Registration:	N83866
Aircraft:	Aeronca BL7-AC	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	1 Minor
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

Analysis

About 20 minutes into the cross-country flight, the pilot observed several lightning strikes ahead of his flight path. He turned 180 degrees to return to his departure point, and after about 5 minutes, he observed a storm developing in his flight path. He then decided to fly south toward the closest airport. Upon reaching the airport, he determined the winds to be light and variable out of the west. On final approach, just before touchdown on runway 23, 'wind started to buffet the aircraft.' Full aileron deflection was used to keep the right wing down after touchdown. The airplane then drifted off the runway and into the grass. As this was occurring, the pilot started to apply 'a little power' to gain more rudder control when 'a large gust of wind hit the aircraft causing the right wing to [go] completely over, striking the surface.' Subsequently, the airplane nosed over. The airplane sustained substantial damage to the right wing spar, both wing struts, and the rudder. The wind, 16 minutes after the accident, was from 260 degrees at 16 knots with gusts to 26 knots.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The pilot's failure to maintain control during landing. A factor was the wind gusts.

Findings

Occurrence #1: LOSS OF CONTROL - ON GROUND/WATER
Phase of Operation: LANDING - ROLL

Findings

1. (C) AIRCRAFT CONTROL - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND
2. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - GUSTS

Occurrence #2: NOSE OVER
Phase of Operation: LANDING - ROLL

Factual Information

On September 1, 2000 at 1538 central daylight time, an Aeronca BL7-AC tail wheel equipped airplane, N83866, registered to and operated by the pilot, was substantially damaged following a loss of control while landing on Runway 23 at the Hot Springs Municipal Airport, Hot Springs, Arkansas. The private pilot, who was the sole occupant, was not injured. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed and a flight plan was not filed for the 14 Code of Federal Regulations Part 91 flight. The cross-country flight had last departed Conway Field, Conway, Arkansas, at 1445.

The pilot reported on NTSB Form 6120.1/2, that he had departed Conway to continue on his planned cross-country flight. He reported the visibility to be about 3-5 miles in "hazy" conditions. About 20 minutes into the flight, he observed several lightning strikes ahead and to the north of his position. He immediately turned 180 degrees to return to Conway, and after flying about 5 minutes, it appeared that a storm was developing to the north in his flight path toward Conway. He then decided to fly south toward Hot Springs, which was the closest airport, to sit and wait out the weather. Upon reaching Hot Springs, he made one pass over midfield to check the windsock. The winds appeared to be light and variable out of the west, so he entered a downwind for Runway 23.

On final approach, just before touchdown, "wind started to buffet the aircraft." The pilot had to utilize full aileron deflection to keep the right wing down after touchdown. The airplane then started to drift off the runway and into the grass. As this was occurring, the pilot started to apply "a little power" to gain more rudder control when "a large gust of wind hit the aircraft causing the right wing to [go] completely over, striking the surface." Subsequently, the airplane nosed over and came to rest "upside down."

Examination of the wreckage by an FAA inspector revealed damage to the right wing spar, both wing struts, and the rudder.

The windsock at Hot Springs was found to be serviceable. The wind, reported by Hot Springs 16 minutes after the accident, was from 260 degrees at 16 knots with gusts to 26 knots.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	43, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine Land	Seat Occupied:	Front
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	Seatbelt, Shoulder harness
Instrument Rating(s):	None	Second Pilot Present:	
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 3 Valid Medical--w/ waivers/lim.	Last FAA Medical Exam:	06/29/2000
Occupational Pilot:		Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	435 hours (Total, all aircraft), 11 hours (Total, this make and model), 402 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 15 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 11 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 9 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Aeronca	Registration:	N83866
Model/Series:	BL7-AC BL7-AC	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	No
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	
Landing Gear Type:	Tailwheel	Seats:	2
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	08/02/2000, Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	1220 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	8 Hours	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	5466 Hours	Engine Manufacturer:	Lycoming
ELT:	Installed, activated, did not aid in locating accident	Engine Model/Series:	O-235-C
Registered Owner:	KEITH R. ECKELMAN	Rated Power:	115 hp
Operator:	KEITH R. ECKELMAN	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual Conditions	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	HOT, 503 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	0 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	1454 CDT	Direction from Accident Site:	0°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Thin Broken / 11000 ft agl	Visibility	12 Miles
Lowest Ceiling:	Overcast / 15000 ft agl	Visibility (RVR):	0 ft
Wind Speed/Gusts:	16 knots / 26 knots	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	260°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	29 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	30° C / 19° C
Precipitation and Obscuration:			
Departure Point:	CONWAY, AR (M03)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	(HOT)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	1445 CDT	Type of Airspace:	Class E

Airport Information

Airport:	HOT SPRINGS MUNI (HOT)	Runway Surface Type:	Asphalt
Airport Elevation:	540 ft	Runway Surface Condition:	Dry
Runway Used:	23	IFR Approach:	
Runway Length/Width:	6595 ft / 150 ft	VFR Approach/Landing:	Full Stop

Wreckage and Impact Information

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

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	ALEXANDER LEMISHKO	Report Date:	04/19/2001
Additional Participating Persons:	JACKIE L BLACK; LITTLE ROCK, AR		
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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