



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Data Summary

Location:	Joshua Tree, CA	Accident Number:	LAX02LA076
Date & Time:	02/03/2002, 0953 PST	Registration:	N9DD
Aircraft:	Beech 95-B55	Injuries:	2 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The twin-engine airplane lost power in both engines while approaching the uncontrolled airport for landing and landed short of the runway in an unprepared field. The airplane was equipped with four fuel tanks; left main and left auxiliary tanks and right main and right auxiliary tanks. Two fuel quantity gauges indicated fuel quantity in either the main tanks or the auxiliary tanks based upon the position selected on a separate switch on the pilot's sub-panel. Approaching the airport the pilot completed the pre-landing checklist and confirmed the fuel selectors were on the main tanks. He had not changed the fuel selector valve handle positions since before takeoff, 45 minutes earlier, and believed he had been feeding fuel from the main tanks the entire flight. He turned on the fuel boost pumps to the "low" position and confirmed the fuel quantity gauge select switch was also set to indicate fuel quantity in the main tanks. As the airplane entered the landing pattern on crosswind leg, 1/2 to 1 mile from the departure end of the runway, the left engine began to "surge." The fuel gauges read 1/3 tank and the pilot, believing fuel supply was not the problem, elected to feather the left propeller and secure the left engine. Continuing the approach, the pilot extended the downwind leg and turned onto base leg about 1.5 miles from the landing runway threshold. As the airplane was turning onto final approach he lowered the landing gear and, as the gear was extending, the right engine began to surge. He then believed he did have a fuel starvation problem and attempted to unfeather and restart the left engine. The airplane was settling rapidly and he realized he wouldn't be able to reach the runway or restart the engines. He located a clearing beyond some houses and landed the airplane there. The person who recovered the wreckage reported draining 23 gallons of fuel from each main tank, 1/2-gallon from the left auxiliary tank and 1 cup of fuel from the right auxiliary tank. The fuel selector valve handles were in the main tank position and the fuel quantity gauge selector switch was in the main tank position. It is possible on this model airplane to select the fuel quantity gauges to indicate fuel quantity in the main tanks while the engines are, in fact, receiving fuel from the auxiliary tanks. Both engines were subsequently installed on a test stand and operated satisfactorily. No mechanical defects were noted on the airframe or engines.

Probable Cause

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The pilot's inadvertent missetting of the fuel selector position on the auxiliary fuel tanks (versus the main tanks) resulting in fuel starvation of the engines.

Findings

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

Findings

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

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

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

Findings
 4. TERRAIN CONDITION - OPEN FIELD

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	39
Airplane Rating(s):	Multi-engine Land; Single-engine Land	Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Instructor Rating(s):	None
Flight Time:	1077 hours (Total, all aircraft), 620 hours (Total, this make and model), 25 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 4 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft)		

Other Flight Crew Information

Certificate:	Commercial	Age:	54
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine Land; Single-engine Sea	Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Instructor Rating(s):	None
Flight Time:	1048 hours (Total, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Beech	Registration:	N9DD
Model/Series:	95-B55	Engines:	2 Reciprocating
Operator:	David S. Blakeslee	Engine Manufacturer:	Continental
Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None	Engine Model/Series:	IO-520-E
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual Conditions	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	PSP, 474 ft msl	Weather Information Source:	Weather Observation Facility
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:	3 knots / , 150°
Temperature:	17° C	Visibility	10 Miles
Precipitation and Obscuration:			
Departure Point:	Santa Monica, CA (SMO)	Destination:	Joshua Tree, CA (L80)

Airport Information

Airport:	Hi Desert (L80)	Runway Surface Type:	Asphalt
Runway Used:	24	Runway Surface Condition:	Dry
Runway Length/Width:	2493 ft / 50 ft		

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
Latitude, Longitude:			

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	RICHARD B PARKER	Adopted Date:	09/30/2003
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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