



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Final Report

Location:	Sheridan, AR	Accident Number:	FTW04LA053
Date & Time:	01/01/2004, 1515 CST	Registration:	N5284C
Aircraft:	Mooney M20R	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	2 Minor
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The aircraft engine lost power 2.5 miles from its destination. Prior to departure the 4,800-hour pilot reported topping-off the fuel tanks with 82 gallons of fuel. Examination of the airplane by an FAA inspector, who responded to the accident site, revealed that the right fuel tank contained approximately 25 gallons of fuel, and the left fuel tank was empty. The fuel selector valve was observed to be in the "LEFT" tank position. An engine run was conducted on February 24, 2004, under the supervision of a FAA inspector, who reported finding no anomalies.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The loss of engine power due to fuel starvation as a result of the pilot's improper positioning of the fuel tank selector. A factor was the lack of suitable terrain for the forced landing.

Findings

Occurrence #1: LOSS OF ENGINE POWER

Phase of Operation: CRUISE

Findings

1. (C) FUEL SYSTEM - STARVATION/EXHAUSTION
2. (C) FUEL TANK SELECTOR POSITION - IMPROPER - PILOT IN COMMAND

Occurrence #2: FORCED LANDING

Phase of Operation: EMERGENCY DESCENT/LANDING

Occurrence #3: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER

Phase of Operation: EMERGENCY DESCENT/LANDING

Findings

3. (F) TERRAIN CONDITION - NONE SUITABLE
4. OBJECT - TREE(S)

Factual Information

On January 1, 2004, approximately 1515 central standard time, a Mooney M20R single-engine airplane, N5284C, was substantially damaged when it impacted the ground during a forced landing following a loss of engine power while diverting to the Sheridan Municipal Airport (9M8), near Sheridan, Arkansas. The instrument-rated private pilot and passenger received minor injuries. The airplane was registered to and operated by the pilot under 14 Code of Federal Regulations Part 91. Instrument meteorological conditions prevailed, and an instrument flight rules (IFR) flight plan was filed for the personal flight. The cross-country flight departed Walnut Ridge Regional Airport (ARG), near Walnut Ridge, Arkansas, approximately 1400, and was destined for the Brownsville/South Padre Island International Airport (BRO), near Brownsville, Texas.

The 4,800-hour pilot reported on the Pilot/Operator Aircraft Accident Report (NTSB Form 6120.1/2) that the fuel tanks were topped-off with 82 gallons at ARG. One hour into the flight from ARG to BRO, the pilot stated that he "switched to the right tank, and about 5 minutes later the engine stopped." I went back to the left tank and tried to restart the engines several times. At one time I got 14-15 inches of manifold pressure for a few seconds, and then it stopped again." Subsequently, the pilot declared an emergency and was vectored by the air traffic controller toward 9M8; however, the airplane was unable to make the runway.

Information obtained from the Little Rock Air Route Traffic Control Center (ARTCC) indicated that the pilot reported the airplane's engine was "running rough," and he was diverting to 9M8. In addition, the pilot reported that he had the airfield in sight and was landing. However, the airplane landed in a wooded area of "stumps and branches," about 2.5 miles northeast of 9M8.

The Sheridan Airport is located 129 nautical miles Southwest of ARG. Little Rock (LIT) forecasted winds aloft at 1200Z from 245 degrees at 38 knots for 5,000 feet and 225 degrees at 38 knots for 9,000 feet.

Examination of the airplane by an FAA inspector, who responded to the accident site, revealed the right wing was buckled and the tail section was torn/twisted 180 degrees. The FAA inspector further reported that the right fuel tank contained approximately 25 gallons of fuel, and the left fuel tank was empty. The fuel selector valve was observed to be in the "LEFT" tank position.

On February 24, 2004, an examination of the engine was conducted at a maintenance facility in Mena, Arkansas, under the supervision of an FAA inspector. From a test truck, the engine ran for 10 minutes, with no anomalies.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	69, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine Land	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	Seatbelt, Shoulder harness
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	Instrument Airplane	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 3 Valid Medical--w/ waivers/lim.	Last Medical Exam:	12/03/2003
Occupational Pilot:		Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	05/19/2003
Flight Time:	4800 hours (Total, all aircraft), 1825 hours (Total, this make and model)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Manufacturer:	Mooney	Registration:	N5284C
Model/Series:	M20R	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	No
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	29-0079
Landing Gear Type:	Retractable - Tricycle	Seats:	4
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	09/19/2003, Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	3368 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	1731.8 Hours	Engine Manufacturer:	Teledyne Continental
ELT:	Installed, not activated	Engine Model/Series:	IO-550G
Registered Owner:	Joseph Koenig	Rated Power:	280 hp
Operator:	Joseph Koenig	Air Carrier Operating Certificate:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Observation Facility, Elevation:	PBF, 204 ft msl	Observation Time:	1453 CST
Distance from Accident Site:	22 Nautical Miles	Condition of Light:	Day
Direction from Accident Site:	112°	Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual Conditions
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Scattered / 900 ft agl	Temperature/Dew Point:	22° C / 17° C
Lowest Ceiling:	Broken / 2700 ft agl	Visibility	10 Miles
Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:	13 knots, 190°	Visibility (RVR):	
Altimeter Setting:	30.17 inches Hg	Visibility (RVV):	
Precipitation and Obscuration:			
Departure Point:	Walnut Ridge, AR (ARG)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	IFR
Destination:	Brownsville, TX (BRO)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	1400 CST	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Airport Information

Airport:	Sheridan Municipal Airport (9M8)	Runway Surface Type:	Unknown
Airport Elevation:	232 ft	Runway Surface Condition:	Unknown
Runway Used:	NA	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:		VFR Approach/Landing:	None

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Minor	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	1 Minor	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	2 Minor		

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Frank McGill	Adopted Date:	06/30/2004
Additional Participating Persons:	Jamie L Black; FAA FSDO; 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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