



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Data Summary

Location:	Coachella, CA	Accident Number:	WPR09CA137
Date & Time:	03/02/2009, 1615 PDT	Registration:	N180RR
Aircraft:	RUDOLPH RALPH MONROE STARLITE	Injuries:	1 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

Analysis

During a local personal flight, the engine of the amateur-built airplane lost power without warning. The pilot looked for a field to land in, but overshot the field and impacted desert terrain. During the crash sequence, the aircraft sustained substantial damage to both of the wings, the landing gear, and the firewall. Examination of the engine found that the rear connecting rod at the crankshaft journal was separated and exhibited severe heat distress signatures consistent with oil starvation to the bearing. The respective crankshaft journal displayed a dark black/blue coloration consistent with heat distress. The forward crankshaft journal and connecting rod remained undamaged.

Flight Events

Enroute - Loss of engine power (total)
Emergency descent - Off-field or emergency landing

Probable Cause

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be:
A total loss of engine power due to oil starvation to the rear crankshaft journal.

Findings

Aircraft-Aircraft power plant-Eng oil sys (airframe furnish)-(general)-Malfunction - C
Aircraft-Aircraft power plant-Engine (reciprocating)-Recip eng oil sys-Failure - C
Environmental issues-Physical environment-Terrain-Rough terrain-Contributed to outcome

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial	Age:	70
Airplane Rating(s):	Multi-engine Land; Single-engine Land	Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Instructor Rating(s):	None
Flight Time:	2500 hours (Total, all aircraft), 50 hours (Total, this make and model), 2500 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 25 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 10 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 3 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Manufacturer:	RUDOLPH RALPH MONROE	Registration:	N180RR
Model/Series:	STARLITE	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Operator:	On file	Engine Manufacturer:	BOMBARDIER
Air Carrier Operating Certificate:	None	Engine Model/Series:	ROTAX 447
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Observation Facility, Elevation:	TRM, 115 ft msl	Weather Information Source:	Weather Observation Facility
Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual Conditions	Lowest Ceiling:	None
Condition of Light:	Day	Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:	3 knots, 140°
Temperature:	29° C / -8° C	Visibility	10 Miles
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Thermal, CA (TRM)	Destination:	Bermuda Dunes, CA (UDD)

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

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Patrick H Jones	Adopted Date:	06/11/2009
Note:	This accident report documents the factual circumstances of this accident as described to the NTSB.		
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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