



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Final Report

Location:	Parker City, IN	Accident Number:	CEN15LA098
Date & Time:	01/04/2015, 1603 EST	Registration:	N349EA
Aircraft:	RAYTHEON AIRCRAFT COMPANY A36	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:	Loss of control in flight	Injuries:	1 Serious
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The pilot reported that, during cruise flight, the air traffic controller instructed him to descend from 9,000 to 4,000 ft. While performing the descent checklist, the pilot switched fuel tanks, and the engine subsequently lost power. The pilot further reported that he was certain that the engine restarted and that the event put him "behind the airplane in performing...cockpit duties." The next thing the pilot remembered was the controller informing him that he was flying in circles and losing altitude. The pilot thought the airplane was in a spin and tried to regain control. After the airplane broke out of the clouds into poor visibility and snow, the pilot chose to land in a cornfield. During the landing, the airplane impacted trees and terrain. A witness reported observing the airplane at a low altitude traveling at a high rate of speed, then it pitched up to almost vertical flight, descended, and impacted terrain. No preaccident mechanical malfunctions or failures were noted with the airplane that would have precluded normal operation.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be:

The pilot's loss of airplane control while troubleshooting an engine issue in instrument meteorological conditions, which resulted in impact with trees and terrain.

Findings

Aircraft	Performance/control parameters - Not attained/maintained (Cause)
Personnel issues	Aircraft control - Pilot (Cause)
Environmental issues	Low visibility - Effect on personnel Snow - Effect on personnel

Factual Information

On January 4, 2015, about 1603 eastern standard time, a Raytheon Aircraft Company A36 single-engine airplane, N349EA, was substantially damaged after impacting terrain while maneuvering near Parker City, Indiana. The private pilot, who was the sole occupant, sustained serious injuries. The airplane was registered to Black Gold Aviation, LLC, Norris City, Illinois, and operated by the pilot. Instrument meteorological conditions (IMC) prevailed at the time of the accident and an instrument flight rules (IFR) flight plan was filed for the 14 Code of Federal Regulations Part 91 personal flight. The airplane departed from the Carmi Municipal Airport (CUL), Carmi, Illinois, approximately 1400 central standard time, and was destined for the Delaware County Regional Airport (MIE), Muncie, Indiana.

According to the pilot, prior to the accident flight, he completed two practice instrument approaches at CUL, then obtained a weather briefing for a flight to MIE. The airplane departed CUL at 1345 central standard time, and prior to obtaining his IFR clearance, the pilot noted the autopilot would not engage so he returned to CUL. After landing, the pilot checked the circuit breaker and fuse for the autopilot with no problems noted. The pilot cycled the avionics master switch and the autopilot was then determined by the pilot to be functioning. The pilot then departed CUL at 1400 central standard time.

At 1549, air traffic control (ATC) instructed the pilot to descend at his discretion from 9,000 feet to 4,000 feet. While performing the descent checklist, the pilot switched fuel tanks at which time the engine lost power. The pilot stated he was certain the engine restarted and resulted in "putting me behind the airplane in performing my cockpit duties." The next thing the pilot remembered was ATC informing him he was flying in circles and losing altitude. The pilot felt he was in a spin and attempted to regain control of the airplane. The airplane broke out of the cloud layer and the pilot recalled it snowing with poor visibility. The pilot located a harvested cornfield and made the decision to land in the cornfield. The pilot does not recall why he decided to execute an off-airport landing. During the landing, the airplane impacted terrain and trees.

A witness, who was located near the accident site, reported he observed the airplane at a low altitude traveling at a high rate of speed heading in a northerly direction. The witness observed the airplane pitch nose up to almost vertical flight, and then turn to a west-southwest heading, before impacting the cornfield. The airplane impacted terrain, bounced, and impacted trees.

After reflecting on the accident flight, the pilot noted the following for reasons not to perform the flight:

- "1. First long flight after annual and doing it in poor weather.
2. Limited flying time due to my end of year work schedule and airplane being in annual for two weeks.

3. The weather I had set myself a minimum of 1,000 feet for shooting approaches (If I recall correctly ceilings at MIE at time of briefing were 1,300, they had dropped I believe to 850 to 900 feet at time of arrival).

4. Autopilot malfunctioned on first departure; it had never done that before.

5. Should have left fuel tank selector alone, had not used that much fuel."

At 1553, the MIE automated surface observing system reported the wind from 270 degrees at 16 knots, gusting to 25 knots, visibility 3/4 mile, decreasing snow, mist, sky broken at 1,200 feet, ceiling overcast at 1,800 feet, temperature 0 degrees Celsius, dew point minus 2 degrees Celsius, and an altimeter setting of 30.02 inches of Mercury.

An examination of the airplane by two Federal Aviation Administration inspectors, and technical representatives from Textron Aviation and Continental Motors revealed the three propeller blades were twisted and bent aft. The forward fuselage was crushed upward and distorted. The flaps and landing gear appeared to be in the retracted position. No preaccident mechanical malfunctions or failures were noted with the airplane that would have precluded normal operation.

History of Flight

Maneuvering	Loss of control in flight (Defining event) Collision with terr/obj (non-CFIT)
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Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	59
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine Land	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	3-point
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 3 With Waivers/Limitations	Last FAA Medical Exam:	02/14/2014
Occupational Pilot:	No	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	03/06/2014
Flight Time:	421 hours (Total, all aircraft), 59 hours (Total, this make and model), 349 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	RAYTHEON AIRCRAFT COMPANY	Registration:	N349EA
Model/Series:	A36	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	No
Airworthiness Certificate:	Utility	Serial Number:	E-3549
Landing Gear Type:	Retractable - Tricycle	Seats:	6
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	12/22/2014, Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	3651 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	1188 Hours as of last inspection	Engine Manufacturer:	Continental
ELT:	Installed, activated, did not aid in locating accident	Engine Model/Series:	IO-550-B89B
Registered Owner:	BLACK GOLD AVIATION LLC	Rated Power:	
Operator:	On file	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Instrument Conditions	Condition of Light:	Dusk
Observation Facility, Elevation:	MIE, 937 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	8 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	1553 EST	Direction from Accident Site:	120°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Thin Broken	Visibility	1 Miles
Lowest Ceiling:	Broken / 1200 ft agl	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	16 knots / 25 knots	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/ None
Wind Direction:	270°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30.02 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	0° C / -2° C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	Light - Mist; Light - Snow		
Departure Point:	Carmi, IL (CUL)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	IFR
Destination:	Muncie, IN (MIE)	Type of Clearance:	IFR
Departure Time:	1400 CST	Type of Airspace:	Class D

Airport Information

Airport:	Delaware County Regional Airpo (MIE)	Runway Surface Type:	N/A
Airport Elevation:	937 ft	Runway Surface Condition:	Unknown
Runway Used:	N/A	IFR Approach:	Unknown
Runway Length/Width:		VFR Approach/Landing:	None

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Serious	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 Serious	Latitude, Longitude:	40.113056, -85.242500 (est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Aaron M Sauer	Report Date:	04/27/2015
Additional Participating Persons:	Robert Curley; Federal Aviation Administration; Indianapolis, IN Jan Smith; Textron Aviation; Wichita, KS Kurt Gibson; Continental Motors; Mobile, AL		
Publish Date:	10/24/2017		
Note:	The NTSB did not travel to the scene of this accident.		
Investigation Docket:	http://dms.ntsb.gov/pubdms/search/dockList.cfm?mKey=90573		

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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](#).