



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Data Summary

Location:	Sebring, FL	Accident Number:	ERA15FA139
Date & Time:	03/02/2015, 1150 EST	Registration:	N797A
Aircraft:	ADAMS DONALD L DA1	Injuries:	1 Fatal
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The private pilot, who was also the owner/builder of the experimental amateur-built airplane, had just taken off for a personal flight. Witnesses reported hearing “spitting and sputtering” engine noise as they observed the airplane descending from a low altitude. The pilot subsequently performed an off-airport landing about 1 mile south of the airport. During the landing, the fuel tank was compromised, and a postcrash fire ensued, which destroyed the cockpit and consumed the propeller and all of the fuselage fabric coverings forward of the empennage. Based on this evidence, it is likely that the engine experienced a loss of power shortly after takeoff, which resulted in the need for an off-airport landing.

Postaccident examination of the airplane, which included disassembly of its converted 75-horsepower automobile engine, did not reveal evidence of any preimpact mechanical malfunctions or failures; however, fire damage destroyed the fuel tank, fuel lines, carburetor, and fuel filter. According to a friend of the pilot, the accident flight was the airplane’s first flight since it was damaged after experiencing a loss of engine power during takeoff about 2 years before the accident. The airplane’s maintenance logbooks were not located, and its maintenance and operational history could not be verified. The reason for the partial loss of engine power could not be determined based on the available evidence.

Toxicology testing of the pilot detected several previously unreported medications, and an autopsy identified hypertensive and atherosclerotic heart disease; however, it is unlikely that symptoms from the pilot’s heart disease or the effects of any of the detected medications impaired his ability to respond to the emergency.

Flight Events

Initial climb - Loss of engine power (partial)
Emergency descent - Off-field or emergency landing
Post-impact - Fire/smoke (post-impact)

Probable Cause

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: A partial loss of engine power for reasons that could not be determined based on the available evidence.

Findings

Not determined-Not determined-(general)-(general)-Unknown/Not determined - C

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	76
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine Land	Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Instructor Rating(s):	None
Flight Time:	(Estimated) 1950 hours (Total, all aircraft), 50 hours (Total, this make and model)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Manufacturer:	ADAMS DONALD L	Registration:	N797A
Model/Series:	DA1	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Operator:	On file	Engine Manufacturer:	Volkswagen
Air Carrier Operating Certificate:	None	Engine Model/Series:	
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Observation Facility, Elevation:	SEF, 33 ft msl	Weather Information Source:	Weather Observation Facility
Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual Conditions	Lowest Ceiling:	
Condition of Light:	Day	Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:	6 knots, 130°
Temperature:	26° C / 17° C	Visibility	10 Miles
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Sebring, FL (SEF)	Destination:	Sebring, FL (SEF)

Airport Information

Airport:	SEBRING RGNL (SEF)	Runway Surface Type:	N/A
Runway Used:	N/A	Runway Surface Condition:	Unknown
Runway Length/Width:			

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Fatal	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Fire:	On-Ground
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Luke Schiada	Adopted Date:	06/09/2016
Note:	The NTSB traveled to the scene of this accident.		
Investigation Docket:	http://dms.nts.gov/pubdms/search/dockList.cfm?mKey=90799		

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), established in 1967, is an independent federal agency mandated by Congress through the Independent Safety Board Act of 1974 to investigate transportation accidents, determine the probable causes of the accidents, issue safety recommendations, study transportation safety issues, and evaluate the safety effectiveness of government agencies involved in transportation. The NTSB makes public its actions and decisions through accident reports, safety studies, special investigation reports, safety recommendations, and statistical reviews.

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.