

Inspector Statement

FAA IIC: Troy Fields

Accident: N3078Y

NTSB ID: CEN14LA218

Accident date: 04/27/2014

I, Troy Fields, was on accident duty when I received a call from the Ft. Worth Regional Operations Center at approximately 1430 on April 27, 2014 and notified me of an aircraft accident that occurred in NE Oklahoma at approximately 1338 that same day. The tail number of the aircraft was N3078Y and local law enforcement informed me that there were 3 people on board with no fatalities but all passengers had been transported to a Coffeyville, KS hospital with unknown injuries. I spoke with OHP Trooper Cordero and he informed me that the accident scene was secure by himself and the local Sheriff's department. It would take me several hours to get to the scene so I coordinated overnight security of the aircraft with the NTSB and local law enforcement and opted to arrive early the next day. Upon arrival of the accident scene OHP Trooper Eddie Rose met me with information that the pilot and front seat passenger was transported to Tulsa, OK St. John's hospital due to their extensive injuries and that the backseat passenger was still in Coffeyville, KS hospital with minor injuries. Upon arriving at the aircraft the nose was pointed towards the west and the aircraft was laying in the upright position on its belly, gear up. The right wing was sheared in half with approximately 50% of it still intact with the fuselage and the rest of the wing was in one piece approximately 100 feet behind the wreckage, against a tree on the ground. The aircraft had substantial damage. I immediately took pictures of the accident scene and the aircraft wreckage. When inspecting the aircraft the engine did not show any evidence of fluid leakage. The prop was damaged and appeared that it was not under power upon impact. The fuselage remained intact but was deformed and buckled throughout. The instrument panel showed the flap switch up, mixture at full rich, propeller at High RPM, throttle at idle, Gear handle was in the UP position, speed indicator showed 0, tach gauge showed 0, EFT was at 0, Oil temp and pressure both read 0, the battery and alternator were both in the off position, MAG switch was off, aux fuel off, L and R fuel quantity read 0, elevator trim was at 3 units down and the fuel selector valve was positioned to the left wing. There were guns, turkey decoys and several duffel bags with personal belongings and hunting gear inside the aircraft. There was a lot of blood in the cockpit, especially on the pilot side. Trooper Rose then told me that the pilot suffered a major head laceration during the accident. During my investigation of the wreckage I did not see or smell any evidence of fuel in, on or around the aircraft and there were no fuel stains on the ground or trees at the accident scene. The left wing was fully intact with very little damage, so I removed the fuel cap and was not able to see any evidence of fuel in the left wing. I then checked the severed bladder on the right wing that was still attached to the aircraft and did not find any evidence of fuel in that bladder. I then walked back to the outboard section of the right wing and inspected the bladder for evidence of fuel and did not find any traces of fuel at that time. I could easily see the impact of the tree on the wing due to an indentation on the leading edge that was consistent with the impact on the tree,

approximately 15-20 feet off the ground. Looking back I could see where the aircraft first started to clip the trees before the right wing impacted the tree, severing it in half. When the right wing hit it turned the aircraft to the right and the left elevator struck another tree causing heavy damage to the left elevator and rudder before coming to a stop. I called and discussed my initial findings with the assigned NTSB Investigator, Mr. Scott Arnold. At that time he discussed having the engine and airframe manufacturer send representatives to assist in the investigation. Between myself and Mr. Arnold we coordinated Mr. Mike Council with Continental engines and Mr. Jan Smith and Brian Weber with Beech and Cessna, which is now Textron Aviation to meet me at the accident scene the following morning. While I was still at the scene I was able to interview the only known eyewitness, Mr. Ernie Petty and got a signed statement from him. He stated that he was approximately ¼ mile from the accident when it happened. He was standing outside and heard what sounded like a "jet". When he looked up the aircraft was approximately 50-100 feet above the ground and the engine was not running but the prop was spinning. He watched the aircraft disappear over the trees when he heard the aircraft impacting trees and crash. He rushed to the scene to find the front seat passenger still in his seat but in pain. The pilot was still in his seat and was very bloody and disoriented, with a huge gash on his head. The backseat passenger was on the right side of the aircraft in the seat directly behind the front seat passenger, the seat faces aft, and he was complaining of pain. After that I left the accident scene to go to the hospital and was informed that all 3 passengers were now at St. Johns hospital in Tulsa. I spoke with the family of the pilot and was informed that he and the front seat passenger were in the ICU, as stated by Trooper Rose. I was able to interview and get a signed statement from the backseat passenger, Mr. Ryan Bozeman. He stated that the last fuel stop was on Friday, April 25 in Jonesboro, AR. He stated that when they were flying from Washington, KS that he looked up front and saw that the left fuel tank was empty and the right had ½ tank of fuel. He stated that he saw the gauges himself. When I asked Mr. Bozeman if he was a pilot or aircraft mechanic he said no, that he does not have any experience or knowledge of aircraft. He said that they were flying along and the engine just shut off without any sputtering or backfiring. He said the pilot called ATC to notify them that they were having engine problems and that they needed to find a good place to set the aircraft down. He said the pilot positioned the aircraft so that it glided upon descent. He said that the aircraft hit the trees then impacted the ground before coming to a rest. He stated that he smelled gas and called 911 with his cell phone. The eyewitness and another man got him out of the wreckage and then pulled the other men out. Within a few minutes fire rescue showed up.

The next morning I met the aforementioned aircraft factory accident representatives in Bartlesville, OK. They followed me to the accident scene because it was in a rural area. The Continental engine rep was able to confirm engine continuity when rocking the propeller. The prop governor remained attached and intact and the control arm would move when the cabin propeller lever was moved. The magnetos remained attached and intact and the harnesses were intact and showed no signs of damage. The oil dipstick was removed and traces of dark engine oil was found. All fuel lines and hoses remained attached with no damage. The fuel manifold remained attached and intact. There was no residual fuel stains noted and all fittings remained intact. The fuel lines attaching the fuel injectors to the fuel manifold remained intact and attached. All of the fuel injectors were

removed and inspected. The fuel injector orifices were open and normal. The engine driven fuel pump remained attached and intact. The engine driven fuel pump was removed and the drive coupling was found to be intact. A small amount of fuel was present in the main fuel hose located between the firewall to the fuel pump. This residual fuel tested negative for water contamination. The oil sump, fuel metering unit and throttle body were not accessible due to the position of the airplane on the ground. We were able to visually determine that these components were intact. Continuity was confirmed with both the mixture and throttle arm. When these components were moved the corresponding control arm full motion was attained when the cockpit lever was moved. The upper spark plugs were removed and inspected. The spark plug electrodes and ceramic insulators were clean with little evidence of combustion deposits. The Continental engine representative performed a lighted borescope inspection on each cylinder. The coloration of valves and piston crowns was light with little evidence of combustion deposits. No anomalies were noted on the intake or exhaust valves. After a full inspection by the Continental engine representative this engine did not reveal any anomalies which would have prevented it from producing fully rated horsepower. The airframe representatives were able to confirm full continuity of all flight controls. The battery had been disconnected by fire rescue, so I attached it and we had power. With electrical power applied we were able to verify that the fuel pump operated in both the low and high modes. The fuel supply line to the engine was removed at the firewall fitting and was found to contain residual fuel. The fuel return line was removed at the firewall fitting and it contained residual fuel also. Electrical power was turned on for a cursory test of the fuel quantity sensors and fuel quantity indicators. The left wing fuel quantity sensors were manually actuated and a corresponding indication was observed on the left fuel quantity indicator. The right wing fuel quantity sensors could not be tested due to the separation of the outboard section of the right wing.

After leaving the accident scene this day, May 29, 2014, I again stopped by the hospital to check on the status of the pilot, Mr. Paul Woolard, certificate number 003189694. I was able to see his wife and son but not him. The following day, April 30, 2014, I drove up to the hospital in hopes of seeing him again. The family informed me that he was medicated for pain and was asleep. At this time they provided me with his pilot certificate, drivers license, medical and last fuel receipt. I documented these items with pictures and gave them back to the family on the spot. At that time the family stated that Mr. Woolard would be in the hospital all week but wasn't sure when he would be released so I told her we would tentatively meet Friday, 05/02/2014, to get his statement and ask him some questions. Within 30 minutes of this meeting ending I was called by the Continental engine representative that is a part of the investigation and he told me that he heard that the pilot was being released that day, contrary to what his family had just told me. I contacted his wife the next day, 05/01/2014 via text to confirm me meeting him at the hospital in Tulsa and she said that they got discharge orders "unexpectedly" late the day we met and decided to drive back to Montgomery, AL that night, so I was unable to meet with the pilot. I finally received a pilot statement on May 23, 2014. The pilot stated that he filed an IFR flight plan for a flight from Washington County Kansas (K38) to Claremore, Oklahoma (KGCM), which is contrary to the air traffic control transcript. The transcript stated that N3078Y was cleared to Shawnee Regional Airport via as filed. At that time the pilot of N3078Y requested to change his destination to

Claremore, OK. Air Traffic Control cleared N3078Y to Claremore, OK via direct. Before leaving the pilot stated that he pre-flighted the aircraft, sumped the tanks and visually verified the fuel quantity on board which was consistent with his calculations and fuel gauge indications. He then departed K38 at 12:07 pm on 04/27/2014 with approximately 20 gallons of fuel in each tank. Upon reaching a planned cruise altitude of 7,000 feet he pulled back on the throttle until the manifold pressure was 23", then pulled the prop back to 2300 rpm and set the mixture to an EGT of 1430 degrees. He stated that he later descended to 5,000 feet. According to Air Traffic Control transcripts and recordings the pilot slowed down in flight due to a door popping open in flight and then later requested to descend and fly at a lower altitude due to "heckuva headwind". Neither of these were mentioned in the pilot statement. The pilot stated that he had flown for 1 hour and 18 minutes on the left fuel tank before switching to the right fuel tank. When the pilot switched to the right fuel tank the engine immediately stopped firing but the propeller continued to spin. He then stated that he tried to adjust the fuel selector switch by moving it back to the left tank and then back to the right tank, with no positive results. He then checked the mags and master to make sure that they were on. He then made sure the prop, mixture and throttle controls were all full forward. He then turned on the auxiliary fuel pump, in both low and high speed settings, with no positive results. By this time he stated that he was at 3500 AGL and was looking for an open area to land. The pilot stated that he did not lower the landing gear because he was afraid they would catch the trees that he was descending towards and flip the aircraft. He then stated that he clipped the trees with the right wing before setting the aircraft on the ground upright.

Summary

After reviewing all of the information that I collected during this investigation and stated in this statement, it appears that the aircraft crashed from a loss of engine power due to fuel deprivation. I am passing this information and statement to Mr. Scott Arnold with the NTSB for further investigation. If you need any more information please feel free to let me know.

Sincerely, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
Troy Fields
FAA IIC
06/02/2014