



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	PINE BLUFF, Arkansas	Accident Number:	FTW95LA162
Date & Time:	April 9, 1995, 14:15 Local	Registration:	N5277Z
Aircraft:	WSK PZL MIELEC DROMADIER	M-18A	Aircraft Damage: Destroyed
Defining Event:		Injuries:	1 Serious
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 137: Agricultural		

Analysis

WHILE MANEUVERING TO DUMP WATER ON A FIRE, POWER WAS REDUCED TO DESCEND TO 100 FEET ABOVE GROUND LEVEL (AGL). WHEN THROTTLE WAS INCREASED TO LEVEL OFF, THE ENGINE DID NOT RESPOND. THE PILOT SWITCHED HANDS ON THE CONTROL STICK TO PUMP THE AUXILIARY FUEL PUMP; HOWEVER, THE ENGINE DID NOT RESPOND. HE THEN SWITCHED HIS HANDS BACK IN AN ATTEMPT TO ACTIVATE THE DUMP LEVER AND AIRCRAFT CONTROL WAS LOST. THE AIRPLANE WAS DESTROYED BY A POST IMPACT FIRE. THE REASON FOR THE LOSS OF ENGINE POWER COULD NOT BE DETERMINED. THE OPERATOR REPORTED FINDING WOOD 'CUT BY THE PROPELLER' AT THE ACCIDENT SITE.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: THE LOSS OF ENGINE POWER FOR UNDETERMINED REASONS AND THE PILOT'S FAILURE TO MAINTAIN MINIMUM REQUIRED AIRSPEED FOR FLIGHT, RESULTING IN AN INADVERTENT STALL. A FACTOR WAS THE PILOT'S DIVERTED ATTENTION.

Findings

Occurrence #1: LOSS OF ENGINE POWER
Phase of Operation: MANEUVERING

Findings

1. (C) REASON FOR OCCURRENCE UNDETERMINED

Occurrence #2: FORCED LANDING

Phase of Operation: EMERGENCY DESCENT/LANDING

Occurrence #3: LOSS OF CONTROL - IN FLIGHT

Phase of Operation: EMERGENCY DESCENT/LANDING

Findings

2. (C) AIRSPEED(VS) - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND

3. STALL - INADVERTENT - PILOT IN COMMAND

4. (F) DIVERTED ATTENTION - PILOT IN COMMAND

Occurrence #4: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER

Phase of Operation: DESCENT - UNCONTROLLED

Factual Information

On April 9, 1995, at 1415 central daylight time, a WSK PZL MIELEC M-18A Dromadier, N5277Z was destroyed while maneuvering near Pine Bluff, Arkansas. The commercial pilot was seriously injured. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed for the fire fighting flight.

During a telephone interview with the investigator-in-charge, the pilot reported the information in this paragraph. While over-flying the fire on a heading of 330 degrees, approximately 1000 feet mean sea level (MSL), he turned right to a heading of 180 degrees, and reduced power to descend. At approximately 100 feet above ground level (AGL), throttle was increased to level off and the engine did not respond. He switched hands on the control stick to pump the auxiliary fuel pump, which is located on the right side of the cockpit; however, the engine did not respond. He then switched his hands back in an attempt to activate the dump lever, which is located on the left side of the cockpit, to dump his load of water. Subsequently, he "stalled" the airplane and it began to "spin."

A witness in a spotter airplane reported observing the airplane start a slow turn to the southwest. He "looked at the fire and when he looked back at the tanker, it was in a slow roll to the left, headed to the north. The plane made two complete rolls before striking the ground at about a 45 degree to 60 degree angle."

During a telephone interview with the investigator-in-charge, the operator reported that while at the accident site, he observed "wood that was cut by the propeller." The airplane was destroyed by a post impact fire.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial	Age:	41, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Center
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	None	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 2 Valid Medical-w/ waivers/lim	Last FAA Medical Exam:	October 24, 1994
Occupational Pilot:	Yes	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	2264 hours (Total, all aircraft), 106 hours (Total, this make and model)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	WSK PZL MIELEC	Registration:	N5277Z
Model/Series:	M-18A DROMADIER M-18A DROM	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Restricted (Special)	Serial Number:	1Z018-12
Landing Gear Type:	Tailwheel	Seats:	1
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	August 10, 1994 100 hour	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	2500 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	28 Hrs	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	965 Hrs	Engine Manufacturer:	PZL-KALISZ
ELT:		Engine Model/Series:	AS621R-M18
Registered Owner:	RIDDELL FLYING SERVICE, INC.	Rated Power:	967 Horsepower
Operator:		Operating Certificate(s) Held:	
Operator Does Business As:	RIDDELL AVIATION	Operator Designator Code:	KTEG

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:		Distance from Accident Site:	
Observation Time:		Direction from Accident Site:	
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	15 knots / 20 knots	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	180°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	29 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	27°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	MONTICELLO (M76)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:		Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	14:00 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class E

Airport Information

Airport:		Runway Surface Type:	
Airport Elevation:		Runway Surface Condition:	
Runway Used:	0	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:		VFR Approach/Landing:	Forced landing

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Serious	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Passenger Injuries:		Aircraft Fire:	On-ground
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 Serious	Latitude, Longitude:	34.210845,-92.010276(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Wigington, Douglas
Additional Participating Persons:	BYRON H GLASS; LITTLE ROCK , AR
Original Publish Date:	September 24, 1995
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=19387

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) is an independent federal agency charged by Congress with investigating every civil aviation accident in the United States and significant events in other modes of transportation—railroad, transit, highway, marine, pipeline, and commercial space. We determine the probable causes of the accidents and events we investigate, and issue safety recommendations aimed at preventing future occurrences. In addition, we conduct transportation safety research studies and offer information and other assistance to family members and survivors for each accident or event we investigate. We also serve as the appellate authority for enforcement actions involving aviation and mariner certificates issued by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and US Coast Guard, and we adjudicate appeals of civil penalty actions taken by the FAA.

The NTSB does not assign fault or blame for an accident or incident; rather, as specified by NTSB regulation, “accident/incident investigations are fact-finding proceedings with no formal issues and no adverse parties ... and are not conducted for the purpose of determining the rights or liabilities of any person” (Title 49 *Code of Federal Regulations* section 831.4). Assignment of fault or legal liability is not relevant to the NTSB’s statutory mission to improve transportation safety by investigating accidents and incidents and issuing safety recommendations. In addition, statutory language prohibits the admission into evidence or use of any part of an NTSB report related to an accident in a civil action for damages resulting from a matter mentioned in the report (Title 49 *United States Code* section 1154(b)). A factual report that may be admissible under 49 *United States Code* section 1154(b) is available [here](#).