



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Palmer, Alaska	Accident Number:	GAA16CA486
Date & Time:	September 3, 2016, 16:30 Local	Registration:	N4831E
Aircraft:	Champion 7GC	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:	Fuel exhaustion	Injuries:	2 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

According to the pilot of the single-engine airplane, shortly after takeoff and about 500 ft above ground level, the engine lost power. He reported that he attempted to restart the engine but was unsuccessful. The pilot made a forced landing in a hay field; the airplane landed hard and struck a telephone pole.

The pilot reported to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Aviation Safety Inspector (ASI) that he did not preflight the airplane or check the fuel level before departure and that there should have been fuel in the tanks from the last flight in June 2016, 3 months before the accident.

The pilot reported to the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) Investigator-In-Charge (IIC) who received the initial notification that "he ran the airplane out of gas." He further reported that there were no mechanical malfunctions or anomalies with the airframe or engine that would have prevented normal operation.

The airplane sustained substantial damage to both wings.

The NTSB IIC attempted to contact the pilot on multiple occasions but was informed by the FAA ASI that the pilot was out of the country for the winter.

Probable Cause and Findings

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

The pilot's inadequate preflight inspection and failure to assess the airplane's fuel quantity before departure, which resulted in fuel exhaustion.

Findings

Aircraft	Fuel - Fluid level
Aircraft	Fuel - Not inspected
Personnel issues	Preflight inspection - Pilot
Environmental issues	Pole - Contributed to outcome

Factual Information

History of Flight

Takeoff	Fuel exhaustion (Defining event)
Emergency descent	Off-field or emergency landing

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	78,Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land	Seat Occupied:	
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	None	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	None	Last FAA Medical Exam:	
Occupational Pilot:	No	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	(Estimated) 1000 hours (Total, all aircraft), 1 hours (Total, this make and model)		

Passenger Information

Certificate:		Age:	
Airplane Rating(s):		Seat Occupied:	Unknown
Other Aircraft Rating(s):		Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):		Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):		Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:		Last FAA Medical Exam:	
Occupational Pilot:	No	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:			

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Champion	Registration:	N4831E
Model/Series:	7GC NO SERIES	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:	1959	Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	7GC-39
Landing Gear Type:	Tailwheel	Seats:	2
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	Unknown	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	1650 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:		Engine Manufacturer:	Lycoming
ELT:		Engine Model/Series:	O-320-D2B
Registered Owner:		Rated Power:	140 Horsepower
Operator:	On file	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	UHMM, 574 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	215 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	05:30 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	110°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Few / 4000 ft AGL	Visibility	
Lowest Ceiling:		Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	4 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/ None
Wind Direction:	210°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/ N/A
Altimeter Setting:		Temperature/Dew Point:	15°C / 9°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Palmer, AK (PAQ)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	Palmer, AK	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:		Type of Airspace:	Class G

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	2 None	Latitude, Longitude:	61.619754,-148.980041(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Hicks, Michael
Additional Participating Persons:	Darren Thews; FAA; Anchorage, AK
Original Publish Date:	April 4, 2017
Note:	This accident report documents the factual circumstances of this accident as described to the NTSB.
Investigation Docket:	https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=94010

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. A factual report that may be admissible under 49 U.S.C. § 1154(b) is available [here](#).