Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Presidio, Texas	**Accident Number:**	WPR19LA027
Date & Time:	November 14, 2018, 15:42 Local	**Registration:**	N1715J
Aircraft:	Piper PA28	**Aircraft Damage:**	Substantial
Defining Event:	Collision with terr/obj (non-CFIT)	**Injuries:**	1 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

Prior to departure, the airplane was fueled with 50 gallons of fuel, which the pilot estimated would last for 5 hours of flight time. He planned for a 3 hour and 40-minute flight.

When the airplane was about 55 miles from the destination airport, the engine began to sputter. According to the pilot, the right fuel tank was selected, so he switched to the left fuel tank position. The engine ran without any further issues until the left fuel tank ran out of fuel. The pilot performed a forced landing to a dirt landing strip without incident. After landing, the pilot examined the airplane and determined the right fuel tank was empty and the left tank had over 15 gallons of fuel. He started the engine and decided to continue the flight to Presidio, Texas. As the airplane reached about 5,500 ft after takeoff, the engine began to lose partial power. When the airplane was about 6 miles from the destination airport, the engine lost total power. The pilot attempted to land in a dry riverbed; however, the airplane stalled about 20 ft above the ground and the landing gear struck terrain damaging the outboard section of the right wing.

A postaccident examination of the airplane revealed the fuel tanks were intact; the left fuel tank was empty, and the right fuel tank contained approximately 15 gallons of fuel. Because the student pilot's recollection of the available fuel after the first forced landing differs from what was found after the accident, the investigation could not determine the reason for the loss of engine power.

Probable Cause and Findings

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

The student pilot's loss of control at low altitude during a forced landing, which resulted in impact with terrain and substantial damage to the right wing. A contributing factor in the accident was the loss of engine power for undetermined reasons.

Findings

Personnel issues	Aircraft control - Student/instructed pilot
Aircraft	(general) - Unknown/Not determined

Factual Information

History of Flight

Enroute-cruise	Loss of engine power (total)
Uncontrolled descent	Collision with terr/obj (non-CFIT) (Defining event)

On November 14, 2018, at 1542 central standard time, a Piper PA-28-140, N1715J, was substantially damaged when it was involved in an accident near Presidio, Texas. The student pilot was not injured. The airplane was operated as a Title 14 *Code of Federal Regulations* Part 91 personal flight.

The pilot reported that prior to departure, the airplane was fueled with 50 gallons of fuel, which he estimated would last for 5 hours of flight time. He planned for a 3 hour and 40-minute flight from Arlington, Texas, to Presidio, Texas.

The pilot stated he intended to have the right fuel tank selected for the first hour of the flight, then switch to the left fuel tank for 2 hours, and then switch back to the right fuel tank for the remainder of the flight. As the airplane overflew Alpine, Texas, the engine began to sputter. According to the pilot, the right fuel tank was selected, so he switched to the left fuel tank position. The engine ran without any further issues until he "ran the left fuel tank dry." The pilot observed a ranch with a dirt landing strip, and he performed a forced landing without incident. After landing, the pilot examined the airplane and determined the right fuel tank was empty and the left tank had over 15 gallons of fuel. He started the engine and decided to continue the flight to Presidio, Texas. As the airplane reached about 5,500 ft after takeoff, the engine began to surge and [was] "missing." When the airplane was about 6 miles from Presidio Lely International Airport, the engine lost total power. The pilot attempted to land in a dry riverbed; however, the airplane stalled about 20 ft above the ground and the landing gear struck terrain damaging the outboard section of the right wing.

Examination of the airplane by a Federal Aviation Administration inspector revealed the fuel tanks were intact at the accident site; the left fuel tank was empty, and the right fuel tank contained approximately 15 gallons of fuel. No other preimpact anomalies were noted by the inspector.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Student	**Age:**	56,Male
Airplane Rating(s):	None	**Seat Occupied:**	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	**Restraint Used:**	3-point
Instrument Rating(s):	None	**Second Pilot Present:**	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	**Toxicology Performed:**	No
Medical Certification:	Class 3 With waivers/limitations	**Last FAA Medical Exam:**	April 6, 2017
Occupational Pilot:	UNK	**Last Flight Review or Equivalent:**	
Flight Time:	(Estimated) 0 hours (Total, all aircraft), 0 hours (Total, this make and model)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Piper	**Registration:**	N1715J
Model/Series:	PA28 140	**Aircraft Category:**	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:	1968	**Amateur Built:**	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal; Utility	**Serial Number:**	28-24127
Landing Gear Type:	Tricycle	**Seats:**	
Date/Type of Last Inspection:		**Certified Max Gross Wt.:**	
Time Since Last Inspection:		**Engines:**	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:		**Engine Manufacturer:**	Lycoming
ELT:		**Engine Model/Series:**	O-320 SERIES
Registered Owner:		**Rated Power:**	
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:	KPRS,2940 ft msl	**Distance from Accident Site:**	6 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	21:35 Local	**Direction from Accident Site:**	311°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	**Visibility**	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	**Visibility (RVR):**	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	4 knots /	**Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:**	None / None
Wind Direction:	150°	**Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:**	N/A / N/A
Altimeter Setting:	30.37 inches Hg	**Temperature/Dew Point:**	13°C / -11°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Arlington, TX (GKY)	**Type of Flight Plan Filed:**	None
Destination:	Presidio, TX (PRS)	**Type of Clearance:**	None
Departure Time:		**Type of Airspace:**	

Airport Information

Airport:	Presidio Lely Intl PRS	**Runway Surface Type:**	
Airport Elevation:	2938 ft msl	**Runway Surface Condition:**	Dry;Rough;Vegetation
Runway Used:		**IFR Approach:**	None
Runway Length/Width:		**VFR Approach/Landing:**	Forced landing

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 None	**Aircraft Damage:**	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:		**Aircraft Fire:**	None
Ground Injuries:		**Aircraft Explosion:**	None
Total Injuries:	1 None	**Latitude, Longitude:**	29.564167,-104.269996(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Cornejo, Tealeye		
Additional Participating Persons:	Steve Miller; Federal Aviation Administration; Lubbock, TX		
Original Publish Date:	June 1, 2022	**Investigation Class:**	3
Note:	The NTSB did not travel to the scene of this accident.		
Investigation Docket:	https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=98643		

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