

Brief of Accident

Adopted 08/12/2010

ERA10CA240 File No. 27043      04/22/2010      Hampton, GA      Aircraft Reg No. N654U      Time (Local): 18:40 EDT

Make/Model: Grumman/G164  
Engine Make/Model: Pratt & Whitney / R-985  
Aircraft Damage: Substantial  
Number of Engines: 1  
Operating Certificate(s): None  
Type of Flight Operation: Banner Tow  
Reg. Flight Conducted Under: Part 91: General Aviation

	Fatal	Serious	Minor/None
Crew	0	0	1
Pass	0	0	0

Last Depart. Point: Same as Accident/Incident Location	Condition of Light: Day
Destination: Same as Accident/Incident Location	Weather Info Src: Weather Observation Facility
Airport Proximity: On Airport/Airstrip	Basic Weather: Visual Conditions
Airport Name: Tara Field	Lowest Ceiling: None
Runway Identification: 24	Visibility: 10.00 SM
Runway Length/Width (Ft): 4503 / 75	Wind Dir/Speed: 200 / 004 kts
Runway Surface: Asphalt	Temperature (°C): 24
Runway Surface Condition: Dry	Precip/Obscuration: No Obscuration; No Precipitation

Pilot-in-Command      Age: 35  
Certificate(s)/Rating(s)  
Commercial; Private; Single-engine Land

Instrument Ratings  
None

Flight Time (Hours)  
Total All Aircraft: 1524  
Last 90 Days: 164  
Total Make/Model: 109  
Total Instrument Time: Unk/Nr

\*\*\* Note: NTSB investigators used data provided by various entities, including, but not limited to, the Federal Aviation Administration and/or the operator and did not travel in support of this investigation to prepare this aircraft accident report. \*\*\*

The pilot stated that he departed on the 2.5-hour banner-tow flight with 3 hours of fuel on board. After completing the banner tow, he began the return flight to the airport and noticed that the fuel level was "lower than expected." The pilot attempted to conserve fuel by "slowing down and bringing the mixture back." After dropping the banner at the destination airport, the pilot applied full power to conduct a go-around and the engine lost power. The pilot attempted to land in the grass past the end of the runway, but had "too much momentum." The airplane traveled down an embankment, contacted a ditch, nosed over, and came to rest inverted. The pilot reported that there were no mechanical malfunctions or failures. The horizontal stabilizer and rudder sustained substantial damage. Postaccident inspection by a Federal Aviation Administration inspector revealed that the fuel tanks contained a "very little trace" of fuel.

Updated at Aug 12 2010 2:52PM

Brief of Accident (Continued)

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OCCURRENCES

Approach-VFR go-around - Fuel exhaustion  
Approach-VFR go-around - Loss of engine power (total)  
Emergency descent - Collision with terr/obj (non-CFIT)

FINDINGS

Personnel issues-Task performance-Planning/preparation-Fuel planning-Pilot - C  
Aircraft-Fluids/misc hardware-Fluids-Fuel-Fluid level - C

Findings Legend: (C) = Cause, (F) = Factor

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

A total loss of engine power during a go-around due to fuel exhaustion as a result of the pilot's inadequate preflight planning.