National Transportation Safety Board
Aviation Accident Final Report

Location:	LA TORTUE, Haiti	**Accident Number:**	ATL99LA026
Date & Time:	11/29/1998, 0815 EST	**Registration:**	N171TE
Aircraft:	Beech 65-A90	**Aircraft Damage:**	Destroyed
Defining Event:		**Injuries:**	1 Minor
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation - Business		

Analysis

According to the pilot, during pre-flight examination of the airplane performed the evening prior to the flight, the fuel gauges read 'around' 3/4 full. Visual examination of the tanks by the pilot revealed the tanks were not full but he believed the quantity was more than adequate to conduct his flight. While at 17000 feet MSL and approximately 60 miles from his destination, both the left engine and right engine suffered fuel exhaustion. After declaring an emergency, the pilot ditched the airplane in the Atlantic Ocean about ten miles off the coast of Isle De La Tortue, Haiti. The pilot received minor injuries and was rescued by the United States Coast Guard at 1730 the same day. Based on data obtained from the Raytheon Aircraft Company and 3/4 full fuel tanks, the total available flight time for this flight was approximately 4.00 hours. The actual flight time for this flight was 3.25 hours.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: Inadequate preflight planning/preparation by the pilot, which resulted in fuel exhaustion due to an inadequate supply of fuel. A factor was the terrain (water).

Findings

Occurrence #1: LOSS OF ENGINE POWER(TOTAL) - NONMECHANICAL
Phase of Operation: CRUISE - NORMAL

Findings
1. (C) PREFLIGHT PLANNING/PREPARATION - IMPROPER - PILOT IN COMMAND
2. (C) FLUID,FUEL - EXHAUSTION
3. (C) FUEL SUPPLY - INADEQUATE - PILOT IN COMMAND

Occurrence #2: FORCED LANDING
Phase of Operation: DESCENT - EMERGENCY

Occurrence #3: DITCHING
Phase of Operation: LANDING - FLARE/TOUCHDOWN

Findings
4. (F) TERRAIN CONDITION - WATER

Factual Information

On November 29, 1998, at 0815 Eastern Standard Time, a Beech 65-A90, N171TE, ditched into the Atlantic Ocean near Isle De La Tortue off the northern coast of Haiti. The aircraft was operated by BPI Aerospace, in Miami, Florida under the provisions of Title 14 CFR Part 91, and Instrument Flight Rules (IFR). Instrument meteorological conditions prevailed at the accident site and an IFR flight plan was filed. The Airline Transport pilot received minor injuries and the airplane sustained substantial damage. The airplane departed North Perry Airport (HWO), Hollywood, Florida, at 0500 the same day destined for Cape Haitian (MTCH), Haiti.

According to the summary statement written by the pilot, during pre-flight examination of the airplane performed the evening prior to the flight, the fuel gauges read "around" 3/4 full. Visual examination of the tanks by the pilot revealed the tanks were not full but he believed the quantity was more than adequate to conduct his flight. The pilot had stated, the flight from HWO to MTCH would take 2 1/2 hours. The pilot was told by the previous flight crew that the aircraft had been flown for a total of 50 minutes since the last time the fuel tanks were topped off, and there should have been above 4 1/2 hours of fuel left on board. No additional fuel was added to the aircraft prior to takeoff. While at 17000 feet MSL and approximately 60 miles from the destination, both the left engine and right engine lost power. The pilot declared an emergency, and ditched the airplane in the Atlantic Ocean about ten miles off the coast of Isle De La Tortue, Haiti. The airplane sank in approximately 600 feet of water. The pilot was rescued by the United States Coast Guard at 1730 the same day.

The following airplane endurance approximations are based on data obtained from the Raytheon Aircraft Company and Standard Atmospheric conditions of 59 degrees Fahrenheit, 29.92 inches of mercury, at sea level: The estimated takeoff weight of the airplane was 7670 pounds, which included the pilot (200 pounds) and 1872 pounds of fuel, based on 3/4 full fuel tanks. For a climb to 17000 feet MSL (ISA -International Standard Atmosphere = +13 degrees Celsius), approximately 160 pounds of fuel would be used and the climb would take approximately 18 minutes. The approximate cruise fuel flow is 229 pounds per hour (per engine) which yields an estimated time at cruise of 3.74 hours. The estimated total available flight time, including climb and cruise at the indicated performance values and the estimated fuel quantity available at takeoff is 4.00 hours (see attached Pilot's Operating Manual with performance data sheets). The actual flight time for this flight was 3.25 hours.

An NTSB 6120.1/2 form was not completed by the pilot nor has the pilot been located or spoken to by an investigator from the National Transportation Safety Board.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Airline Transport; Commercial; Flight Engineer	**Age:**	45, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Multi-engine Land; Single-engine Land	**Seat Occupied:**	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	**Restraint Used:**	
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	**Second Pilot Present:**	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	**Toxicology Performed:**	No
Medical Certification:	Class 3 Valid Medical--no waivers/lim.	**Last FAA Medical Exam:**	11/05/1997
Occupational Pilot:		**Last Flight Review or Equivalent:**	
Flight Time:	4200 hours (Total, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Beech	**Registration:**	N171TE
Model/Series:	65-A90 65-A90	**Aircraft Category:**	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		**Amateur Built:**	No
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	**Serial Number:**	LJ180
Landing Gear Type:	Retractable - Tricycle	**Seats:**	9
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	10/14/1998, Continuous Airworthiness	**Certified Max Gross Wt.:**	9300 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		**Engines:**	2 Turbo Prop
Airframe Total Time:	10119 Hours	**Engine Manufacturer:**	P&W
ELT:	Installed	**Engine Model/Series:**	PT6A SER
Registered Owner:	VEC CORPORATION DBA	**Rated Power:**	750 hp
Operator:	BPI AEROSPACE	**Operating Certificate(s) Held:**	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Instrument Conditions	**Condition of Light:**	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	DPP, 0 ft msl	**Distance from Accident Site:**	0 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	0754 EST	**Direction from Accident Site:**	0°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Unknown / 0 ft agl	**Visibility**	0 Miles
Lowest Ceiling:	Broken / 1600 ft agl	**Visibility (RVR):**	0 ft
Wind Speed/Gusts:	/	**Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:**	/
Wind Direction:		**Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:**	/
Altimeter Setting:		**Temperature/Dew Point:**	22°C / 22°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:			
Departure Point:	NORTH PERRY, FL (HWO)	**Type of Flight Plan Filed:**	IFR
Destination:	HAITI, OF (MTCH)	**Type of Clearance:**	IFR
Departure Time:	0500 EST	**Type of Airspace:**	Class G

Airport Information

Airport:		**Runway Surface Type:**	
Airport Elevation:		**Runway Surface Condition:**	
Runway Used:	0	**IFR Approach:**	
Runway Length/Width:		**VFR Approach/Landing:**	Forced Landing

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Minor	**Aircraft Damage:**	Destroyed
Passenger Injuries:	N/A	**Aircraft Fire:**	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	**Aircraft Explosion:**	None
Total Injuries:	1 Minor	**Latitude, Longitude:**	

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	BUTCH WILSON	**Report Date:**	02/16/2001
Additional Participating Persons:	LEE BROOKS SCOTT M GRABON DAN HUTCHINGS		
Publish Date:			
Investigation Docket:	NTSB accident and incident dockets serve as permanent archival information for the NTSB's investigations. Dockets released prior to June 1, 2009 are publicly available from the NTSB's Record Management Division at pubinq@ntsb.gov, or at 800-877-6799. Dockets released after this date are available at http://dms.ntsb.gov/pubdms/.		