

ACCIDENT

Aircraft Type and Registration:	North American P-51D Mustang, G-TFSI	
No & Type of Engines:	1 Packard Motor Car Co Merlin V1650-7 piston engine	
Year of Manufacture:	1944 (Serial no: 124-44703)	
Date & Time (UTC):	9 July 2017 at 1522 hrs	
Location:	Duxford Aerodrome, Cambridgeshire	
Type of Flight:	Private	
Persons on Board:	Crew - 1	Passengers - None
Injuries:	Crew - None	Passengers - N/A
Nature of Damage:	Aircraft sustained structural damage	
Commander's Licence:	Airline Transport Pilot's Licence	
Commander's Age:	55 years	
Commander's Flying Experience:	21,000 hours (of which 9 were on type) Last 90 days - 160 hours Last 28 days - 68 hours	
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot and further enquires by the AAIB	

Synopsis

The engine stopped without warning during the latter stages of an air display and after it restarted and stopped several times, the pilot concluded he would be unable to return to the airfield. The aircraft sustained damage after a forced landing in a cornfield, but the pilot was uninjured. The cause of the engine stopping was not known at the time of publication of this report.

History of the flight

The aircraft was part of a formation of 'Warbirds' approaching the end of their display sequence. The pilot reported he had been airborne for approximately 25 minutes without incident when he did an engine health check and changed the fuel selection to the right wing tank. The formation continued downwind, completed a flypast and separated onto three crosswind legs, climbing to approximately 1,000 ft. As the pilot applied additional power the engine stopped without warning.

The engine restarted and ran at the commanded power setting for a few seconds before stopping for a second time. The pilot climbed away from the formation, transmitted a PAN call and prepared for a forced landing. The engine started and stopped several times, allowing a gradual descent. He reselected the left fuel tank and auto-leaned the mixture, at which point the engine ran for between 10 and 15 seconds before stopping again.

With the aircraft in a tight downwind position at approximately 500 ft and 150 mph, the pilot selected 20° of flap and the landing gear down. He commenced a turn onto the base leg, but it became evident that the aircraft had insufficient energy and would not make the runway. Turning in the direction of a cornfield to the east of the M11 motorway, the pilot selected the landing gear up and the flaps to 30° just before landing at approximately 120 mph. The aircraft remained upright and the pilot was uninjured.



Figure 1

G-TFSI after the accident
(Image reproduced with the permission of the pilot)

Aircraft information

G-TFSI was delivered in 1945 as a single-seat Mustang and remained in service with the United States Air Force until 1956. In 2001, work commenced on overhauling the aircraft and converting it to a two-seat trainer with dual controls. The work was completed in May 2007 and the aircraft was relocated to its permanent base at Duxford Aerodrome.

Conclusion

At the time of publication of this report, the aircraft was being returned to the overhaul facility in the USA for investigation and repair. The cause of the engine stopping was not known, but based upon the reported symptoms, the maintenance agency suspected it to be carburettor related.

The pilot's recognition of the need to make a forced landing and configuring the aircraft in time for the landing ensured a successful outcome.