

**Aviation Safety Investigation Report
198903841**

Maxair Drifter

28 May 1989

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NOTE: All air safety occurrences reported to the ATSB are categorised and recorded. For a detailed explanation on Category definitions please refer to the ATSB website at www.atsb.gov.au.

This accident was not subject to an on scene investigation.

Occurrence Number: 198903841
 Occurrence Type: Accident

Location: Gallah Creek (35km south of Mt Isa) QLD
 Date: 28 May 1989
 Time: 1500

Highest Injury Level: Nil

Injuries:

	Fatal	Serious	Minor	None
Crew	0	0	1	1
Ground	0	0	0	-
Passenger	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	1

Aircraft Details: Maxair Drifter
 Registration: 25-0218
 Serial Number: 25-0218
 Operation Type: Private
 Damage Level: Substantial
 Departure Point: Mt Guide Airstrip QLD
 Departure Time: 1420
 Destination: Mt Guide Airstrip QLD

Approved for Release: 21st August 1989

Circumstances:

The aircraft was cruising at 400 feet above the ground when it suffered a complete engine failure. The pilot stated that the engine had cut out in a manner similar to being switched off. There was no rough running or misfiring, before the engine stopped. A single air restart was attempted without success. The pilot then elected to land in a dry creekbed, the only available cleared area within gliding distance. During the forced landing, the right main landing gear struck a rock. This resulted in a severe swing to the right during which the aircraft struck trees lining the creekbed. The aircraft was transported to a workshop at Mt Isa, where a successful attempt was made to restart the engine. The engine ran at low power settings, for some time with out fault. The owner restarted and ran the engine a further four times without incident. However, the engine fuel filter was later found to have been substantially contaminated with foreign debris. The fuel filter had previously been reinstalled in the reverse sense by the aircraft owner. This effectively contained all incoming contaminants on the inside of the filter screen tube, which caused a restriction to the fuel flow.

Significant Factors:

The following factors were considered relevant to the development of the accident

1. The fuel filter had previously been refitted in the reverse sense - Maintenance error.
2. Engine failed due to fuel starvation.
3. Aircraft forced to land on unsuitable terrain.

Reccomendations:

Australian Ultralight Federation should continue to circularise warnings to owner/operators of the dangers in carrying out maintenance tasks on their aircraft that are beyond their level of experience/ability.