

## **FOUGA CM 170 Magister**

*accident during initial climb*

*Long Beach, California*

**Weather:** VMC, daylight

**Pilot certificates:** ATP

**Instrument-rated:** yes

**Total time:** 1,922 hours

A former French Air Force Fouga CM 170 jet trainer lost power in both engines and collided with terrain after takeoff about 2,000 feet from the departure end of the runway. The pilot reported a landing gear problem and requested clearance to return to the airport. Witnesses reported hearing the airplane's jet engines "spool down" during the takeoff climb about 600 feet above the ground (agl). The airplane descended to about 300 feet agl when the left wing dipped, followed by the right wing dropping rapidly. Another pilot who witnessed the accident stated the airplane appeared to stall. The airplane then descended uncontrolled, colliding with terrain off the airport boundary. The airplane had been recently imported to the United States disassembled and defueled. The design of the aircraft fuel system does not accommodate preflight fuel sampling from the rubber bladder fuel cells in the fuselage. Water and small particles were observed in a fuel sample drained from the fuel lines after the accident. The pilot's landing gear warning light illuminates any time engine rpm drops below 18,000 rpm and any one of the three landing gear is retracted.

**Aircraft damage:** destroyed

**Injuries:** pilot—fatal; passenger—fatal

**Probable cause:** A loss of power to both engines due to fuel contamination, and the pilot-in-command's failure to maintain an adequate airspeed during the subsequent emergency, which resulted in an inadvertent stall. Factors in the accident were: 1) the manufacturer's inadequate design of the airplane's fuel system, which does not facilitate fuel sampling during preflight inspections or routine normal maintenance; 2) the lack of a fuel drain valve in the fuel system for fuel sampling purposes.