

Memorandum of Conversation



Date: May 20, 2013

Time: 1045 central daylight time

Conversation Including: Pilot Dennis Swanson

Conversation Regarding: CEN13LA286, N9075T

Duration of Call: 15 Minutes

Summary & Factual Information from Conversation:

The pilot reported that the purpose of the accident flight was to release four skydivers at 10,500 feet mean sea level (msl). He had flown a similar flight earlier that day to the same altitude without any anomalies with the airplane. Before the accident flight, he used a calibrated dipstick to determine how much fuel was onboard the airplane. The left fuel tank contained 10 gallons and the right fuel tank contained 5 gallons of fuel. The pilot noted that the skydiving flight to 10,500 feet msl typically took 20-25 minutes and required 8 gallons of fuel.

The pilot reported that the flight climbed to 10,500 feet msl without any anomalies or malfunctions with the airplane. Typically, all of the skydivers exit the airplane during a single pass over the landing zone; however, the accident flight required two passes over the landing zone which added an additional 2-5 minutes to the accident flight. After releasing the final skydivers on the second pass, the pilot immediately initiated a descent to reenter the traffic pattern at the departure airport. He stated that his descent was made with 15-inches of engine manifold pressure at 2,200 rpm, which resulted in a 1,000-1,500 feet per minute descent rate at 150 miles per hour. After entering the traffic pattern for runway he applied carburetor heat about midfield on the downwind leg. The pilot reported there were no anomalies with engine operation immediately after the application of carburetor heat; however, the airplane experienced a loss of engine power before the turn to base leg.

The pilot reported seeing a helicopter approaching the airport from the west at a similar altitude to his airplane. The pilot stated that he delayed his turn onto base leg because the helicopter would have conflicted with his flying a normal traffic pattern. He attempted to radio the helicopter pilot that he needed to land immediately, but the airplane was already in a position where a glide to the runway was not possible due to insufficient altitude. The pilot elected to make a forced landing to an agricultural field located adjacent to the airport property. The nose landing gear collapsed shortly after touchdown and the airplane subsequently nosed over. The engine firewall and wings were substantially damaged during the accident sequence.

When asked what the cause of the loss of engine power was, the pilot stated that he believed it was a "fuel issue". When asked what type of fuel issue, the pilot stated that the airplane had "ran out of fuel" while in the traffic pattern. Additionally, the pilot said that there were no mechanical issues with the engine before the loss of engine power.

Additionally, the pilot reported that the helicopter had been operating in the local area earlier in the day and that he had a hard time understanding radio transmissions made by the helicopter pilot. The pilot characterized the helicopter pilot's radio transmissions as being "garbled". The

pilot believed had the helicopter not been between his position and the airport that he would have been able to reach the runway following the loss of engine power. However, the pilot stated that had he declared an emergency immediately following the loss of engine power it would have provided the helicopter pilot additional time to maneuver clear of the area.

I can attest that the above summary and factual information was taken on the above stated day, and is correct to the best of my knowledge:

Signed: _ Andrew Todd Fox _

Dated: _ 05/20/2013 _

Andrew Todd Fox
National Transportation Safety Board
Air Safety Investigator