



SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

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NTSB Accident Number: CEN15LA063 – N7015T Long EZ near McGregor, Texas

On November 30, 2014, following the accident involving N7015T at McGregor Executive Airport (PWG), McGregor, Texas, Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Inspector Gary Watson from the North Texas Flight Standards District Office in Irving, Texas traveled to examine the wreckage. In the days following the accident the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) investigator-in-charge (IIC) had several conversations and e-mail exchanges with the FAA Inspector. Inspector Watson said:

1. The wreckage of the airplane was found inverted next to a tree line on the south side of U S highway 84.
2. Law enforcement reported that the southbound airplane had first struck the front end of an SUV traveling eastbound on the highway and then impacted other obstructions before coming to rest inverted.
3. The two occupants in the eastbound SUV were not injured.
4. First responders also reported that the pilot told them that he had climbed to a maximum of 100 to 200 feet when the engine lost power.
5. The pilot also reported to first responders that he had a heavy right wing with more fuel in the right side than the left side.
6. All major components of the airplane were observed at the accident location, with all pieces of the fragmented wreckage located within a radius of about 50 feet.
7. The entire canard was completely separated in one piece.
8. Impact marks on the canard corresponded to impact marks on a steel traffic sign pole.

9. The right wing was completely separated and the right rudder and right aileron remained attached to the separated right wing.
10. The left wing was partially separated at mid-span.
11. The left rudder and the left aileron remained attached to the partially separated left wing.
12. The left side of the fuselage, forward of the instrument panel, including the left rudder pedal was completely separated.
13. The entire nose gear assembly and nose gear attach fitting were separated.
14. The fuel tanks in both wings were breached by impact damage, which resulted in a fuel spill at the accident scene, but there was no postimpact fire.
15. The main landing gear legs remained attached to the fuselage.
16. The right brake assembly and right main landing gear tire and wheel were separated from the right landing gear leg.
17. Both propeller blades were impact separated near the propeller hub and did not show evidence of significant power at impact.
18. The cockpit canopy frame was observed mostly intact and partially impact separated.
19. The inside canopy latch was observed latched and locked. The Plexiglas in the canopy was impact fragmented and was almost completely missing from the cockpit canopy frame.
20. More than one teaspoon of small debris was observed in gascolator bowl. It appeared to be short fiberglass fiber fragments and granules of fiberglass resin particles along with other unidentified debris.
21. An in-line fuel filter was not observed and an internal gascolator filter was not observed.
22. The non-transparent metal gascolator bowl showed corrosion on the top surface and the gasket on the gascolator housing showed excessive wear and a rusty rough surface.
23. The carburetor was not opened and the engine was not further examined.
24. The FAA Inspector reported that his opinion was that it is likely that the excessive amount of debris found in the fuel system had clogged orifices in the carburetor.
25. The Brackett type inlet air filter element was observed to be excessively worn and in need of replacement.

26. The fuel pump circuit breaker was observed in the out, or OFF position.
27. The fuel tank selector was observed in the RIGHT position.
28. An assessment of flight control continuity could not be performed because of impact damage.
29. An emergency locator transmitter (ELT) was not observed in the wreckage.
30. Although a diligent search of the entire accident site was made by the FAA Inspector and by numerous law enforcement officers; an FAA registration certificate and an FAA airworthiness certificate were not observed in the wreckage.
31. A Hobbs meter was observed, but impact damage prevented an estimate of the indicated time.
32. The FAA Inspector took physical possession and retained several incomplete maintenance logbooks that were found inside the airplane wreckage.
33. Those logbooks showed that the engine, a Lycoming O-235-2LC, serial number L-22441-15 was installed in N7015T on July 8, 1985 when the airplane then had a total time of zero hours, and the engine in 1985 then had a total time since new of 1,400.61 hours.
34. A logbook entry on April 21, 2014 showed an annual condition inspection had been completed when the airplane had a total time of 218.9 hours and the engine had a total time since new of 1,511.1 hours.
35. The previous annual condition inspection on April 19, 2013 showed the airplane then had a total time of 214 hours.
36. Those records showed total flight time in that previous one year period of only 4.9 hours.
37. The maintenance logbooks did not show that an engine overhaul had ever been performed.
38. The FAA Inspector reported that he did not retain any parts other than the maintenance logbook, and he authorized the wreckage to be moved to the pilots T-hangar at PWG.
39. First responders reported that they had heard that the pilot of a second airplane, N37RG, was planning to do a take-off immediately after N7015T, but the pilot of N37RG saw the airplane crash and taxied back to his hangar without taking off.
40. The pilot of N7015T was badly injured with multiple leg fractures and head trauma and was removed from the wreckage by fire fighters or medical responders.
41. The FAA Inspector was not able to talk with the pilot of N7015T due to his injuries.

42. A search of FAA records showed that Mr. Eugene G. Herr had never held either an airman certificate or a medical certificate issued by the FAA.
43. FAA records show that Eugene G. Herr completed an Aircraft Bill of Sale, AC Form 8050-2, on April 5, 2011 as the new purchaser of the airplane, and he completed a renewal application on January 10, 2014.
44. The PWG airport manager reported that although N7015T was based in a locked private T-hangar at PWG, the pilot had not recently purchased fuel, and the airport manager's opinion was that N7015T was flown seldom and infrequently compared to the many other airplanes based at PWG.
45. An airport security camera video recording at PWG showed that N7015T and N37RG taxied toward runway 17 at 1241 central standard time.
46. The McGregor Police Department reported that the first 9-1-1 emergency call was received at 1248; therefore the accident time is estimated as 1248.
47. The NTSB IIC interviewed the pilot of N37RG, Mr. Gene Cockrell, who reported:
 - a) He was going to takeoff on PWG Runway 17 in a staggered take-off behind N7015T, and both airplanes were headed to Teague Municipal Airport (68F), Teague, Texas.
 - b) N7015T was to take-off first, southbound on Runway 17.
 - c) N7015T became airborne, climbed to about 20 to 25 feet above ground level, and then began flying erratically.
 - d) Mr. Cockrell said he heard a radio call from N7015T saying that he was aborting take-off because his cockpit canopy had opened.
 - e) Mr. Cockrell lost sight of N7015T as it descended and shortly thereafter saw a large cloud of dust thrown into the air.
 - f) Mr. Cockrell then taxied N37RG back to the ramp and drove to the accident scene.
 - g) Mr. Cockrell spoke briefly with Mr. Herr who requested that he contact a friend to take care of his dog. They did not discuss the accident.

48. The NTSB IIC spoke with the previous registered owner of N7015T, Mr. Dana J. Byerley, Sandy Utah. Mr. Byerley said:

- a) He was the original builder of another Vari Eze which was damaged several years ago in an engine out forced landing.
- b) He had about 75 hours of pilot experience in Vari Eze airplanes.
- c) Mr. Byerley bought Long EZ N7015T in 2008 from the original builder, Gerald Siegel.
- d) During the four years that Mr. Byerley owned N7015T the airplane was disassembled and he never flew it.
- e) Mr. Byerley sold the airplane to Mr. Herr in April 2011, and the airplane was then still completely disassembled.
- f) He said Mr. Herr was a “very nice guy”.
- g) Mr. Herr made two separate trips to Utah and he trailered the airplane, and later trailered the wings, back to Texas.
- h) Mr. Byerley said he knew that Mr. Herr did not have a pilot certificate, and he “strongly cautioned” Mr. Herr that he should NOT attempt to fly it until he had a pilot certificate and that it was very important that he get a thorough check-out from an experienced Long EZ pilot.
- i) Mr. Byerley said he gave all of the aircraft maintenance logbooks to Mr. Herr and he did not keep any copies of those documents.
- j) Mr. Byerley said he did previously have a lot of photos of N7015T, but his computer hard drive crashed several years ago and he no longer had any of those photos.

49. The NTSB IIC was not able to contact the pilot, Mr. Herr, and he did not respond to several requests from the NTSB for him to complete an NTSB Form 6120.1.

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