



SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

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NTSB Accident Number: CEN17LA041 – N329CT at Port Allen, Louisiana

Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Inspectors from the Flight Standards District Office in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, traveled to the accident scene and later conducted follow-up examinations of the airplane wreckage after it had been recovered to a storage location.

The FAA Inspectors reported the following:

1. The student pilot reported to them that after pre-flight checks he departed to the north from Omni Airport (LA46), Port Allen, Louisiana, and climbed to an elevation of about 875 feet when the *“engine sneezed and started to run very slow until it quit”*.
2. The student pilot then conducted a forced landing into a plowed and recently harvested sugar cane field and the airplane came to rest inverted.
3. The left main gear wheel was completely impact separated from the left main gear leg.
4. Impact damage displaced the nose gear leg and resulted in substantial damage to the lower front end of the airplane’s fuselage.
5. There was impact damage to the leading edge of the right wing, which resulted in substantial damage to the right wing spar.
6. There was substantial damage to the left wing fuselage attach fitting, which resulted in the separation of the left wing fuel tank and an immediate and significant fuel leak.
7. There was no postimpact fire.
8. The BRS-6 ballistic recovery parachute was intact and the system had not been activated.
9. Using GPS devices, Google Earth, and a map from the student pilot, the FAA Inspectors estimate the accident location was about N 30.53250 W -91.31500, at a terrain elevation of about 25 feet, mean sea level. The accident location was about 2 miles north-northwest from LA46.
10. The student pilot reported that the Ameri-King AK-450 emergency locator transmitter (ELT) had been in the “arm” position, but the 121.5 MHz ELT did not activate during the accident impact sequence.

11. The student pilot, who was also the airplane's registered owner, removed the wreckage from the sugar cane field and took it to another location.
12. The student pilot reported that his pilot logbook was lost during the impact, and the slash on the recently harvested sugar cane field was burned several days after the wreckage was removed.
13. The FAA Inspectors examined the fuel can used to refuel the airplane and observed that it appeared to be clean and non-contaminated.
14. The FAA Inspectors examined the inside surface of the airplane's gascolator bowl and observed that it was rusty and corroded.



Figure 1 – showing a rusty and corroded gascolator bowl (FAA Photo)

15. An examination of selected copies of aircraft maintenance logbook entries showed that the most recent annual condition inspection had been completed on June 3, 2016 at Hobbs 896.1 hours. The accident occurred about five months later on November 13, 2016, and the student pilot reported the total flight time was then 913 hours.
16. After the FAA Inspectors departed, the airplane's registered owner examined the fuel intake filter (a steel mesh "finger screen") inside the wing root area and discovered the end cap was missing from the finger screen in the fuel tank in the left wing.



Figure 2 – showing steel mesh finger screen with a missing end cap (Aircraft Owner Photo)

17. The airplane's registered owner observed that the end cap was present on the undamaged fuel intake filter (*finger screen*) in the right wing.
18. The airplane's registered owner disassembled and examined the fuel line and discovered a soft dirt ball lodged in the inlet side of the fuel shutoff valve, which is upstream from the in-line fuel filter.



Figure 3 – showing a dirt ball removed from the fuel line (Aircraft Owner Photo)

19. An examination of the fuel system showed that the Flight Design Service Bulletin SB-ASTM-CTSW-6 had been complied with and an earlier design plastic fuel filter had been replaced with Flight Design fuel filter KF28000033.
20. In December 2016, the registered aircraft owner reported that he had already started disposing of parts of the airplane and that he no longer had possession of the Ameri-King AK-450 ELT. Thus, the ELT could not be further examined.
21. The airplane's Rotax engine was not equipped with a "FLYdat" system.

MAINTENANCE AND INSPECTION REQUIREMENTS

The Flight Design CTSW "Maintenance and Inspection Procedures Manual", AU 010 02000, Revision 6, dated November 20, 2008, has the following inspection requirements:

On page 3-5:

"Gascolator. Open gascolator, remove filter and check for cleanliness..."

"Fuel Flow Rate. Check fuel flow rate to be correct every 100 hrs. Compare value with previous value. In case of significant variation or too little flow refer to Paragraph 6 of the Maintenance Manual."

On page 3-7:

"Fuel Intake Filter. Check intake filter every 1000 hours or after negative fuel flow test."

MAINTENANCE AND INSPECTION REQUIREMENTS *(continued)*

On page 6-6:

The instructions in paragraph 6.6.3 show that the procedure to check the fuel intake filters on each wing requires that the fuel must be drained from the tank; the wing uninstalled from the fuselage; and the fuel tank access panel must be removed from the end of the wing root. The intake filter mesh should then be examined for integrity and to insure there are no foreign objects inside and on the surface of the mesh.

SURVIVAL ASPECTS

The accident airplane was equipped with an Ameri-King AK-450 emergency locator transmitter (ELT), which was designed to operate on 121.5 MHz. According to the student pilot, the ELT had been in the “arm” position, but did not activate during the accident impact sequence. No other persons witnessed the accident. The student pilot extracted himself from the inverted wreckage and used his cellular telephone to call for assistance.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

As of February 1, 2009, the 121.5 MHz ELT satellite monitoring (SARSAT) was terminated. According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Satellite and Information Service, "NOAA, along with the U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Air Force, and NASA (the four Federal Agencies who manage, operate, and use the SARSAT system) are strongly advising users of 121.5/243 MHz beacons to make the switch to 406."

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) issued Safety Recommendation A-07-51, on September 4, 2007. The recommendation, addressed to the FAA administrator, stated in part "Seek authority from Congress to require the installation of Technical Standard Order C126 [406 megahertz (MHz)] emergency locator transmitters (ELTs) in all applicable aircraft at the earliest possible opportunity. Further, the Federal Aviation Administration should strongly consider establishing a compliance date for upgrading to 406-MHz ELTs on or before the date that COSPAS-SARSAT will cease satellite processing of 121.5-MHz signals."

On July 8, 2013, because the FAA indicated that it would neither seek authority from Congress nor require the installation of TSO C126 compliant ELTs as recommended, the NTSB classified the FAA's response to Safety Recommendation A-07-51 as "Closed – Unacceptable Action."

(end)