

CEN18LA038
N11188
Palmyra, WI
November 26, 2017

November 26, 2017 a pilot and passenger departed Palmyra municipal airport (88C) on a pleasure flight, the weather was VFR and pleasant. The aircraft was owned by the Flying Hawks Inc. flying club in Palmyra Wisconsin. The pilot in command was exercising his sport pilot privileges and the passenger held a current pilot certificate as well. Prior to departure 7 gallons of fuel was put into N11188 fuel tank. According to the last entry in the last entry into the club status sheet and a statement from the last pilot that operated the aircraft there would have been 5 gallons of fuel remaining in the fuel tank from the last flight. The 7 gallons of fuel added for this flight would have totaled 12 gallons which is the capacity of the aircraft. The aircraft was taxied out to departure end of runway 27 run up normal. The aircraft departed to the west and climbed to an unknown altitude to do some "air work" west of 88C for a few minutes according to the pilot. After air work was completed the pilot decided to get back into the pattern on the downwind of runway 27. Once abeam of the runway on the 27 downwind the pilot noted that the engine had lost power. The pilot asked the passenger to prime the engine to try a restart with negative results. With no power the pilot turned base leg for 27 and realized they were losing altitude and speed fast. The pilot realized he could not make it to runway 27 so he made a right turn (confirmed by eye witness) at low altitude coming into contact to a tree with the right wing causing the aircraft to drop the right wing and stall impacting the ground sliding to a stop from right to left with the tail straight in the air. A witness called for emergency and the injured pilot and passenger were taken to a local hospital. At the scene this inspector noted that the carburetor heat was in the half way position and the fuel shut off lever was in the off position. Flight control continuity was established. The calculated known weights of the pilot and passenger along with the fuel estimated on board at the time of the accident may have been near or beyond the max useful load of the aircraft. A review of the aircraft records revealed that a new battery was installed 07/12/2017 that was an FAA PMA battery however not applicable to the J3C aircraft. this installation would require FAA Field Approval for the installation. While interviewing the passenger he had stated that the fuel shut off was inadvertently turned off by the pilot and that he was trying to push the fuel shut off back in but was unable to push it in. A discussion regarding the fuel shut off with the pilot, he stated he may have inadvertently pulled the fuel shut off and not the carburetor heat and that it was possible however he was not clearly sure.

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