

Communication Summary

December 11, 2018

Information from: Craig Hatch ASI, NTSB



Summary & Factual Information: Mr. Hatch examined the wreckage of N3973L at a salvage yard. He reported that after the accident, the airplane wings were removed, for transport and recovery to the salvage yard. The engine exam was conducted by a representative from the NTSB and a technical representative from the engine manufacturer.

Reportedly the airplane's engine lost power, and the airplane came to rest, submerged in water. Other than for transport, no other work was performed on the airplane, and the airplane had sat at the salvage yard for several weeks, before the examination.

A look inside the cabin noted that engine mixture and carb heat controls were full forward, and the throttle control appeared to be full forward. The engine oil dip stick was removed, and water flowed from the dip stick tube. A visual inspection of the motor was conducted, other than evidence of water submersion, no obvious abnormalities were noted. The engine was not free to rotate; however, after removing water from the cylinders, the engine was free to rotate.

The sound of the magneto impulse couplings were noted. The engine oil was drained from the sump, and appeared to be a mixture of oil and water. The sparkplugs were removed. The plugs appeared wet from water. It was also noted that the sparkplugs appearance varied from "normal" to "worn out – normal", and 'worn out – severe' when compared to the Champion Check-a-Plug card.

The cylinder valve covers were removed from the engine. When the propeller was rotated by hand, continuity through the valve train, and into the accessory section was noted. A thumb compression was completed on each cylinder; suction and compression was present on each cylinder. Each cylinder was inspected via borescope, no preimpact abnormalities were observed.

Both left and right magnetos, and the carburetor were removed from the engine. The magnetos were rotated by an impact driver; spark was observed on each terminal, for both magnetos.

The carburetor finger screen was removed, and other than wet from water, was absent contamination. The carburetor bowl contained a dirty-brown liquid and when tested with water-detecting pasted; tested positive for water. Only a small amount of aviation fuel was present in the accelerator pump section of the carburetor.

No preimpact anomalies were found during the engine exam, and a reason for the accident's flight loss of power was not found.

I can attest that the above summary is correct to the best of my knowledge:

Edward F. Malinowski
National Transportation Safety Board
Air Safety Investigator