

Memorandum of Conversation

Date: 22 May 2019

Time: 1600 central daylight time

Conversation Including: Roger Ian Gerrard; Pilot/Owner

Conversation Regarding: CEN19LA147, N4861P



Summary & Factual Information from Conversation:

Mr. Gerrard stated that before the flight he verified the fuel quantity in each fuel tank with a calibrated dip tube and that the left and right wing fuel tanks contained about 30 gallons and 40 gallons, respectively. He further estimated that the airplane had a useable fuel load of at least 68 gallons, or about 4 hours of fuel. The estimated time enroute for the cross-country flight from Sebastian Municipal Airport (X26), Sebastian, Florida, to De Funiak Springs Airport (54J), De Funiak Springs, Florida, was about 3 hours.

Mr. Gerrard stated there were no anomalies with the airplane or the engine during his preflight check or before-takeoff engine runup. After a normal takeoff, he retracted the flaps and landing gear, and reduced engine power to 21 inches of manifold pressure at 2,400 rpm. He also leaned the fuel mixture to yield a turbo inlet temperature of 1,300° F while at a cruise altitude of 2,500 ft mean sea level (msl).

About 1 hour into the flight, he switched from the right wing fuel tank to the left wing fuel tank. About 45 minutes later, the airplane experienced a total loss of electrical power over the Gulf of Mexico at 2,500 ft msl. He cycled the battery/alternator switch and verified that there were no tripped circuit breakers. He was unable to restore electrical power and turned toward Crystal River Airport (CGC) for a precautionary landing. He manually extended the landing gear using the emergency hand pump; however, because there was no electrical power, the down-and-locked green indicator light did not illuminate.

Mr. Gerrard then switched from the left wing fuel tank to the right wing fuel tank because it contained the most fuel. The engine continued to run normally after he increased the fuel mixture to full rich and selected maximum propeller speed. However, about 1-2 minutes after the landing gear was extended, the airplane had a total loss of engine power. The loss of engine power was sudden and without any warning. The propeller continued to windmill after the loss of engine power. Mr. Gerrard stated that he did not switch back to the left wing fuel tank or attempt an engine restart because he was focused on ditching.

Mr. Gerrard ditched the airplane in the Gulf of Mexico about 5 miles offshore. The airplane initially stayed afloat, but the fuselage eventually took on water and became partially submerged within 15 minutes. The airplane was not equipped with a life raft or life preservers. After the airplane was submerged, he was unable to swim fast enough to keep up with the airplane drifting with the current. He drifted and swam with the current and tide for over 11 hours until he came ashore an unpopulated barrier island around 0300 the following morning. Mr. Gerrard stated that he was

able to signal a fishing boat between 0600 and 0700 who contacted the United States Coast Guard. He was retrieved from the barrier island about 0800 and admitted to a local hospital for treatment of severe dehydration. The airplane was subsequently towed to shore, recovered from the water, and partially disassembled for transport.

--- End of interview summary ---

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: _ 22 May 2019 _

Andrew Todd Fox
National Transportation Safety Board
Air Safety Investigator