



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Timothy N. Sorensen
Aviation Accident Investigator
Central Region

Date: April 13, 2020
Person Contacted: Joseph Muse
NTSB Accident Number: CEN20LA134 – Mesquite, Texas

Narrative:

Mr. Muse was the airplane owner/builder. He reported that, in 2016, the landing gear had collapsed during a ground taxi test which resulted in minor damage to the airplane. The damage had been repaired. As a precaution, the landing gear was locked down for the initial flights to prevent a similar occurrence. The first flight lasted about 45 minutes. The pilot reported the airplane handled “like a dream” and the stall characteristics were good.

After the second flight, the pilot reported he had inadvertently moved the fuel selector to the OFF position while attempting to change tanks. He corrected the situation and had no further difficulties. The pilot also reported the engine tachometer was not working. Mr. Muse noticed that the alternator was turned off and the battery appeared to be depleted. He turned on the alternator and ran the engine up. The tachometer worked as expected during the run-up. In addition, the rudder trim was found to be “rigged opposite.” The issue was corrected before the accident flight.

The accident flight was the third flight of the airplane. The plan for the accident flight was for the pilot to takeoff on the left tank, change to and conduct airwork on the right tank, and then return to the left tank for landing. This was to assist in determining the fuel consumption of the airplane.

Fuel was purchased from the airport was placed into the red portable containers and then into the airplane. The most recent fuel purchase was on March 29th. Prior to the accident flight, the airplane was topped off with about 5 gallons of fuel from red portable containers. The 5 gallons was split evenly between the wing tanks. Two milk jugs were for use after the flight to determine the amount of fuel used during the flights.

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Mr. Muse met the pilot through a mutual friend. The pilot was president of a local EAA chapter, had flown many different airplanes, and owned a Pitts himself. He had volunteered to test fly the airplane. Mr. Muse felt comfortable with his abilities.

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