

John Brannen
Senior Air Safety Investigator
AS-CEN

Date: Various dates

Subject: CEN22LA283

Contact: Benjamin Huffman (pilot/owner)

Mr. Huffman is the owner/pilot of the amateur built Opsrey 2 airplane that was involved in an accident on 6/24/2022. He said that the purpose of the flight was to demonstrate the airplane for a potential buyer. The airplane was powered by a Lycoming O-320-E2D engine. H said that the preflight, run-up and takeoff were normal and right after rotation the engine started losing power. The power loss was gradual and continued until he couldn't maintain altitude. He then picked a field and landed with the gear retracted. On touchdown, the right sponson hit and the wing and fuselage were damaged. Because this is a homebuilt airplane I asked Mr Huffman if he could perform some checks on the airplane and he agreed.

During a later conversation we reviewed the checks that had been performed. The engine still could be rotated and compression was verified on all cylinders. The spark plugs appeared normal. Ignition was not checked but he noted that the engine never stopped running but had reduced power. He informed me that he believed he found the issue. He removed the fuel tanks from the airplane and discovered that the resin was deteriorating and that there was a significant amount of debris in the fuel tanks. He believes that the debris obstructed fuel flow and caused the power loss. He said the tanks have built in baffles and this prevented seeing the deterioration and debris. The fuel tanks were built into the wing and could not be removed to inspect without disassembly of the wing structure. There was some debris in the gascolator and he recalled that when he bought the airplane the gascolator had debris at that time as well.