

National Transportation Safety Board

Office of Aviation Safety

Central Region



CEN23LA010

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

Edward Martin, FAA Aviation Safety Inspector

October 13, 2022

Interviewee: Edward Martin, FAA Aviation Safety Inspector
Date/Time: October 13, 2022 / 0745 CDT
Location: Telephone Call
Investigator: Andrew Todd Fox, NTSB Air Safety Investigator

FAA Inspector Martin and NTSB Investigator Fox discussed the following:

The pilot told FAA Inspector Martin that the flight departed Aitkin Municipal Airport (AIT), Aitkin, Minnesota, with about 16 gallons of fuel distributed evenly between the left- and right-wing tanks, and both fuel tank gauges indicated about $\frac{3}{4}$ full before departure.

The pilot's intended destination was Isedor Iverson Airport (HZX), McGregor, Minnesota; however, instead of flying direct to HZX, he decided to take a more scenic route to enjoy the fall foliage colors near his childhood home near Palisade, Minnesota.

According to the pilot, about 30-45 minutes into the flight, the left fuel tank gauge indicated about $\frac{1}{4}$ full and the right fuel tank gauge remained about $\frac{3}{4}$ full. The pilot decided to reposition the fuel selector to the right fuel tank to correct the fuel imbalance. The pilot stated that the location of his Apple iPad in the cockpit blocked his view of the right fuel tank gauge, so he made a "mental note" to check the right fuel tank gauge in about 30-45 minutes.

The pilot stated that the flight continued uneventfully until the airplane had a loss of engine power due to fuel starvation in the right fuel tank. The loss of engine power occurred about 300 ft above the ground. The engine did not restart after the pilot repositioned the fuel selector valve to BOTH, turned on the electric fuel boost pump, and engaged the electric starter. The pilot completed a forced landing into a wooded area along the Mississippi River shoreline, during which both wings were substantially damaged when the airplane impacted trees and terrain.

Inspector Martin stated that he examined the airplane at the accident site. The left-wing navigation light was found near the initial impact point with trees about 50 ft from the main wreckage. The remaining wreckage was found within a 25 ft radius of the main wreckage. The airplane came to rest on the left side of the fuselage. The left-wing largely separated from the fuselage during impact, and the right-wing attachment points were found fractured. Both main landing gear separated from the fuselage and the nose landing gear was collapsed into the firewall. Flight control continuity was established from the cockpit controls to each flight control surface.

The telephone conversation concluded at 0815 CDT