



John Brannen
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AS-CEN

Date: 6/11/2025

Subject: CEN23LA388

Contact: Joseph Bertapelle (CFI)

Spoke with Mr. Bertapelle regarding an accident involving N9663X, on 8/30/2023. He confirmed he was acting as a flight instructor for the flight. He said that the pilot was a part owner of the airplane and was a low-time pilot and had little experience in the accident airplane. The purpose of the flight was for the pilot to gain experience during a flight from ICT to Tulsa, OK, and return. This was planned to be a normal cross-country flight with no maneuvers planned other than required for the flight.

He said they boarded the airplane and taxied to the run-up area and performed a run-up which showed a 200 rpm drop when one of the magnetos was checked. This was outside of the allowable drop, so they taxied to maintenance where maintenance personnel rotated the spark plugs. They went out again, but this time during the run-up the EGT indication on one cylinder went to zero, so they taxied back to maintenance. Maintenance personnel tested the spark plugs on that cylinder and determined that one of them had failed and replaced the failed spark plug. They went out again, and this time the run-up checks were satisfactory. They initiated takeoff and when the airplane was about 150 ft agl, the tower controller informed them that the airplane was trailing smoke. About this same time, the airplane's engine lost all power, but the propeller continued to windmill. He took control of the airplane and checked the ignition key, and insured all levers (Prop, throttle, mixture) were forward. He didn't have any more time to diagnose and landed the airplane in a field a short distance from the runway. The airplane struck a ditch, and the nose landing gear and right main landing gear separated.