



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Timothy W. Monville
Sr. Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region

Date: June 18, 2013
Person Contacted: FAA Inspector Dave Bear
NTSB Accident Number: ERA13LA119

Narrative:

Inspector Bear was contacted by phone on January 28, 2013, at 1115 EST. He was called at (██████) - ██████.

He stated that the accident occurred at 0930, and he spent yesterday at the site arriving there about 1130. The 83 year old pilot was the sole occupant, and his knees/lower thigh were sliced by the instrument panel. He (Dave) may go may go to the hospital today to interview the pilot.

The accident occurred during takeoff. Witnesses and a first responder asked the pilot what had occurred and he reported that at 300 feet above ground level, the engine lost power.

Inspector Bear reported that following the loss of engine power the pilot turned as if to return, but landed downwind in the field. The propeller contacted the ground causing the engine to separate. While on the ground, the airplane collided with a rut and the airplane then began cartwheeling.

He reported that the fuel tank which is on the cabin side of the firewall, structurally separated from the aircraft. A total of 2 ounces of fuel were noted in the separated fuel tank. The airplane is equipped with a Volkswagen engine.

While on-site he did not smell fuel. A firefighter moved the separated fuel tank and he (Dave) will check with the firefighter who moved it. The airplane is equipped with a two bladed wooden propeller.

The wreckage was located in a hangar at airport Manatee (48X).

The digest was reviewed with him during the phone conversation and he agreed with the content.



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Date: June 18, 2013
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Narrative:

Inspector Bear was contacted by phone on February 13, 2013, at 1319 EST. He was called at [REDACTED].

He stated that he interviewed the pilot and first responders. All first responders (firefighters) said there was no fuel smell at the accident site.

He spoke with the first responder who moved the fuel tank away from the accident site, but that person said there was no fuel inside the tank.

He went to the hospital on January 29, 2013, and while there the pilot told him he had 2 or 3 five gallon fuel containers in the hangar. He also stated that he fueled airplane from either 1 or 2 five gallon containers, adding 5 gallons into the fuel tank which held 8 gallons prior to fueling bringing the total capacity to 13 gallons. Inspector Bear advised that the fuel tank capacity is 15 gallons, but he did not see any evidence of browning of grass at the accident site noting that he walked the entire area that day arriving there about 1130.

That same day following the interview with the pilot in the hospital Inspector Bear went back to the airport and inspected the pilot's hangar. Also, the pilot's hangar mate reported there are only 2 five gallon containers. Both containers were inspected; one container was full of fuel, while the other container was, "bone dry."

The digest was reviewed with him during the phone conversation and he agreed with the content.



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

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Date: June 19, 2013
Person Contacted: Mr. Eugene Massa
NTSB Accident Number: ERA13LA119

Narrative:

Mr. Massa was contacted by phone on June 18, 2013, at 1703 EDT. He was called at his home phone number of [REDACTED]. He returned the phone call on June 19, 2013, at 0933 EDT.

He stated that he has owned the airplane for 20 years and at the time of the accident it was based at 48X. He stated that it is tailwheel equipped, and it has a gravity fed aluminum fuel tank installed in the cockpit aft of the firewall and beneath the instrument panel. The fuel tank capacity is 16 gallons. With respect to the engine, an electronic ignition system is installed. About 3 to 4 months before the accident he had an issue with the ignition system which manifested itself by hearing a loud bang. He subsequently replaced the ignition system.

He stated that he has been flying since 1967, and when asked if his total flight time reported by FAA on his last medical certificate is accurate (2,450 hours), he said no. He stated that he averages 75 to 100 hours flying time each year.

With respect to the NTSB Pilot/Operator Aircraft Accident/Incident report, he stated that he does not have access to the internet, a facsimile machine, and does not have an e-mail address. He provided a home address of [REDACTED], Bradenton, Florida [REDACTED].

With respect to the accident flight, before departure he added 5 gallons of fuel from a container to the aircraft's fuel tank which nearly filled it bringing the total amount of fuel in the tank to between 14 and 15 gallons. He further reported that it is his practice to always fill the fuel tank before departure, and he typically flies 1 hour. He started the engine and taxied to runway 07, where he performed an engine run-up before takeoff. No discrepancies were reported and he checked the gauges before takeoff and everything was satisfactory.

He applied full throttle and noted the rpm was 3,300 (typical rpm for full throttle though maximum red line rpm is 3,600). He accelerated to 60 miles-per-hour (mph) and rotated, then while flying just above the runway surface accelerated to 80 mph and then began to climb. When the flight was between 300 and 400 feet in a climb attitude, the engine quit suddenly and the propeller stopped; there was no vibration. He pushed the nose forward to maintain airspeed and avoid stalling the airplane and maneuvered the airplane for a forced landing in a field. Before touchdown he maneuvered to avoid a cow ahead and impacted the ground in a right wing low attitude. He stated that the ground was soggy and lumpy, and it is likely that the outcome would have been the same because of the ground condition if he had not had to maneuver to avoid the cow. He stated that he was wearing the seatbelt and shoulder harness and did not recall his speed at touchdown. After coming to rest he was concerned about fuel and crawled out of the cockpit on his own accord. He was outside the airplane when first responders arrived.

He stated that he was in the hospital for 5 to 6 days, then in rehab for 2 weeks.

The digest was reviewed with him during the phone conversation and he agreed with the content.