



MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

Stephen Stein
Air Safety Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board
Office of Aviation Safety - Eastern Region

NTSB Accident Number: ERA14LA349
Aircraft Registration & Make/Model: N39ZT; Rocky Mountain Wings Ridge Runner 3
Accident Location: Andrews, NC
Accident Date: July, 10, 2014

Note: The following interview was conducted by Stephen Stein, Investigator-In-Charge (IIC), with Eleazar Nepomuceno, NTSB Investigative Assistant, present.

Interview Summary #1

Thomas Sarvis
Pilot of Accident Airplane

Interview date/time: July 24, 2014; 1023 EDT
Telephone

Mr. Sarvis stated that he decided to fly his airplane on July 10, 2014. He started the engine and taxied onto the runway for takeoff. Once he was airborne, at 200 feet above ground level, and about 2 miles from the end of the runway, he heard the engine sputter and subsequently quit. The pilot was too low to deploy the aircraft parachute. He initiated a forced landing in a field. During the landing, the airplane impacted the ground and skidded about 40 feet. The airplane came to rest nose down in a ditch.

Mr. Sarvis stated that he was able to recover the airplane to his hanger where he conducted a brief engine examination. At the time he noted both wing tank valves were in the OFF position. The pilot examined the fuel system for proper fuel flow, leaks, and water but identified no anomalies.

Mr. Sarvis stated that he prepared the aircraft for an engine run on July 23, 2014. Prior to starting the engine, he machined the propeller blades and removed the impact damage blade sections. After starting the engine, he turned both wing tank valves to the CLOSED position,

and left the collection tank fuel shutoff valve in the OPEN position. The throttle was set at IDLE and tachometer read 800 rpm. According to the pilot, the engine ran for 15 minutes and eventually shut down after the collection tank was void of fuel.

Interview Summary #2

Thomas Sarvis
Pilot of Accident Airplane

Interview date/time: August 11, 2014; 1100 EDT
Telephone

According to the pilot, the accident airplane has a wing tank valve at the root of each wing that are not within the pilot's field of vision while seated in the cockpit. Before each flight, the tank valves need to be set to the OPEN position prior to startup. The pilot stated that on the day of the accident, during startup he had intended to open both tank valves, but was distracted for a brief moment and likely forgot to turn the wing tank valves to the OPEN position. Once in the cockpit he could not see the wing tank valve position. The total time between engine start-up and the accident was about 7 to 8 minutes.

The NTSB IIC asked Mr. Sarvis to run the engine with all fuel shutoff valves in the OPEN position for at least 20 minutes. He complied with the request and said he would call Eleazar Nepomuceno about the results.