



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Robert Gretz
Senior Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region Aviation

Date: October 24, 2013
Person Contacted: Michael Clukey, Johnstown, NY
NTSB Accident Number: ERA14LA018

Narrative:

Mr. Clukey was interviewed via telephone. He stated that prior to the accident; the four-cylinder Volkswagen engine in his Sonex airplane had been indicating low or no oil pressure once it warmed up. Mr. Clukey returned it to the engine manufacturer, Great Plains Aircraft, and subsequently received an overhauled engine. He operated the overhauled engine for about 30 hours uneventfully. During the day prior to the accident, Mr. Clukey performed a routine 25-hour oil change and valve adjustment, with no anomalies noted.

During the accident flight, Mr. Clukey departed the grass airstrip and overflew it once without any difficulties. During the second approach, he intended to land, but was too high and performed a go-around. During the go-around, Mr. Clukey heard two "pops" and the engine lost all power. Additionally, the propeller did not windmill and came to a stop. The airplane was at a low altitude and Mr. Clukey opted to land in a cornfield, rather than try to turn back to the runway. During the landing, the right main landing gear lodged in mud and the airplane nosed over.

After the accident, when Mr. Clukey first attempted to rotate the propeller, it rotated through compression on three cylinders, but then locked on the fourth cylinder. Mr. Clukey moved the propeller backwards slightly and was then able to continue rotation. He subsequently started the engine and it ran without hesitation. The pilot then removed the cylinders and did not observe any preimpact mechanical malfunctions.



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Date: October 24, 2013
Person Contacted: Gordon Nichols, FAA FSD, Albany, NY
NTSB Accident Number: ERA14LA018

Narrative:

Mr. Nichols was interviewed via telephone. He stated that the airplane came to rest inverted in mud. He observed damage to the right wing, where the right main landing gear attached. The pilot/owner/mechanic later confirmed that right wing spar was bent.

Mr. Nichols initially examined the engine and noted oil throughout and that the propeller was not seized. He was limited in what he could do in the muddy field. The pilot is a mechanic who plans to teardown and examine the engine.