

Aircraft accident report:

PIC: Christopher J. Ahn [REDACTED] CFI

Owner/Operator: Quinn Resnick (was not in the plane for this accident)

Time/Date of accident: roughly 3PM on Nov. 24, 2015

I am Chris Ahn and was the PIC for this flight. I was acting as a CFI for Alex Resnick, a student pilot and the son of the owner/operator of the aircraft. Alex Resnick was the flying pilot until the unscheduled engine shutdown, and I was monitoring as CFI and took over controls after the engine shutdown. We took off into the pattern, and turned crosswind. Some time after turning crosswind, I noticed we were not climbing and as I was about to ask why Alex had stopped climbing, Alex vocalized confusion, and I turned over to see what was going on. Because of my active noise cancelling headset, I had not heard or even felt the engine shut down, and according to Alex, there was no sputtering either and it had just completely shut down without warning. I immediately looked over my shoulder to find the airport and to determine whether we could turn around and land or not, but the airport was not in sight and I could not find the runway. We had also just descended below 1600' MSL, and the airport elevation is 1062' MSL, so I determined that turning around the plane with roughly only 500' AGL and no runway in sight would be a fatal mistake. I looked ahead and attempted to find a place to land, but only residential areas were in sight. The power lines also prevented me from being able to land on any roads below me. There were no patches of land in sight and I could only see trees, power lines as tall as the trees, and houses. To avoid causing any fatalities of any bystanders, I attempted to slow the plane down as much as possible and have the wing impact a tree that forked into two large branches, and I attempted to maneuver the plane so that both wings on both sides of the fuselage would strike these branches. While I am uncertain how high we were upon impact, I believe we were roughly 30' AGL. I was successful, and there was no fire or anyone injured except for myself and my student, Alex Resnick. I do not know the cause of the shutdown but observed that both tanks had fuel in them and so fuel starvation was not a factor.

I arrived at the airport around 11:45, and I began my preflight of the plane. Fuel (about 34 gallons) and oil (a little over 7 quarts) was good and nothing looked out of place. Once I was done, I went inside to meet with Chris and create my Nav Log for the flight to Milledgeville. We then went to the plane, started it, and listened to the ATIS. After receiving clearance from ground we taxied to runway 7, and once there, performed our run-ups and pre-takeoff checklist. The RPM drop for the magnetos were around 100 RPM and carb heat drop was about 75 RPM. Again nothing seemed out of normal. We then took off and proceeded to go to Milledgeville. Along the way, we picked up flight following with Atlanta Approach, and spent most of our time working with the new autopilot and understanding how to use it. Once, we got to Milledgeville, I landed, which was not great, but far from my worst. We did a full stop and taxied back to the runway via the taxiway. I was rusty since we had last flown about a month earlier, so we did another two landings at the airport, both to full stops. Both of those landings were good but again not what they were before the plane had had gone into maintenance. We took off again and headed back to Gwinnett, once more picking up flight following. Once we landed at Gwinnett, Chris wanted to do one more go at landing to try to get at least one really good landing. We then taxied back to runway 7 and waited for clearance to takeoff. Once we got clearance, we took off. Everything was normal until I was turning onto the crosswind leg. I normally make that turn at 600 feet AGL, and did again this time, but in the middle of the turn, the engine just stopped. I did not hear it sputter. It sounded like we had turned off the engine after a lesson: just a smooth shutdown as if the mixture was dropped to full lean after parking the plane at an airport and shutting down the plane. After that, I only remember certain moments, and the rest is black to me (most likely because of the concussion I received). I remember that as soon as we realized the engine was out, Chris and I tried to restart the engine, and it nearly caught, but then it shut off again, once more without sputtering. Next I remember being about twenty feet above the trees, about to hit something, and bracing. Finally I remember waking up in the hospital, unsure of what had just happened since it felt like a dream (again most likely because of the concussion).

~~ALEX ROBINSON~~: STUDENT PILOT