



INSPECTOR'S STATEMENT

On October 19, 2016, I, Inspector Gregory J. Mihalyak of the Philadelphia Flight Standards District Office, was tasked to assist Inspector Stephen Koza, also from the Philadelphia Flight Standards District Office, with the investigation of an accident involving an Ercoupe 415C aircraft registered as N415WE, and serial number 2157. This aircraft was substantially damaged when it impacted terrain in Lindenwold, New Jersey. The private pilot and passenger were seriously injured. The pilot reported that he rented the airplane at Claremont Airport (58M), Elkton, Maryland, and added 9 gallons of fuel to the airplane before departing. He flew to N14 without incident to pick up the passenger, and they then departed for a local area flight. The passenger reported that during the flight the pilot stated, "something was wrong with the throttle" before the engine began to lose power. The airplane subsequently impacted terrain and sustained substantial damage to the wings, fuselage, and the cockpit. After assisting Inspector Koza at the accident site, it was decided that after the aircraft was taken Anglin Aircraft Recovery Services, LLC in Clayton, DE, I would examine the engine to see if a failure cause could be determined. On November 17, 2016, I arrived at the Anglin facility and began my investigation into the engine failure.

INSPECTOR CONCLUSION / ACTIONS:

The aircraft engine cowlings were removed and the engine fuel filter was examined to see if it contained fuel. The glass bowl on the filter housing was found to be empty and the filter was soaked with fuel but no actual free fuel was observed.

After a detailed inspection of the engine mounts, crankcase, fuel system and wiring, it was decided that, after propeller removal, a start attempt could be safely tried. A starting fluid was sprayed into the engine intake area and the engine starter was engaged. After a few revolutions, the engine began to fire and briefly ran in spurts while starting fluid was sprayed into the engine air inlet area.

INSPECTOR FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS:

Based on this action, it is considered that the engine was fuel supply was exhausted during the flight thereby resulting in the engine failure.

A copy of this statement will be presented to the NTSB IIC for their evaluation.


Gregory J. Mihalyak
Aviation Safety Inspector
EA-17 FSDO
December 13, 2016