



NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

Eastern Region – Ashburn, Virginia

RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Who: George Pettway, Pilot

When: February 24, 2017

RE: ERA17LA110

In a telephone conversation, Mr. Pettway stated that he had not flown since August 2016 and was taking the club-rented airplane, that he had previously trained in and flown, out for a pleasure flight. Mr. Pettway stated that he conducted a pre-flight inspection and confirmed that both fuel tanks were “topped off” and he added a quart of oil for a total of 7 quarts. He then taxied to the active runway, performed an engine run-up, and departed. Everything was normal. Mr. Pettway said he flew north and climbed to 2,500 feet before he descended to 1,000 feet and entered the Hudson Corridor. During this time, he was communicating on the CTAF announcing his position. Mr. Pettway said the flight was uneventful until he approached the Statue of Liberty and Verrazano Bridge. That is when, and without any warning, he heard a “foomph” noise come from the engine along with a “white mist” that appeared for less than a second and never returned. At this point, Mr. Pettway realized that the engine had lost power (he could not estimate how much) and he was having trouble maintaining altitude. Mr. Pettway attempted to trouble shoot the problem. Although he did not recall the exact sequence of things, he said he switched fuel tanks from left to right, checked the ignition, and looked quickly at the engine gauges. Mr. Pettway recalled the manifold pressure was “all the way up”, but did not remember what the other gauges indicated. He had also moved the propeller lever full forward and declared a May Day over the radio.

Mr. Pettway said the engine never lost full power and he could maneuver the airplane toward land as it was continued to descend. He first headed to a golf course, but then realized the terrain was not suitable. Mr. Pettway then headed for a road but it was crowded with cars, so he made a sharp right turn to land on another road. It was then that he saw powerlines and realized that he was going to hit them. The airplane struck the powerlines and the next thing Mr. Pettway remembered he was being pulled out of the airplane.

Mr. Pettway said the flaps were retracted and the landing was extended in preparation for the forced landing. He had been airborne for about an hour before the power loss and subsequent forced landing.

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