

Statement of Gerald C. Lewis regarding the aircraft accident involving N27265 that occurred on Saturday, March 17, 2018 at approximately 1824Z near the intersection of U.S. 17 and (South) Washington Loop Rd., 4.4 nm Northeast of the Punta Gorda Airport (KPGD)

Aircraft was just returned to service after an Annual inspection and prop replacement (overhaul by Aircraft Propeller Works, Inc.) by Sarasota Avionics and a complete engine overall was completed by Zephyr Aircraft Engines, Inc. Tachometer time was 470.5 hours, Engine total time was 2361.3 hours before the overhaul.

Sarasota Avionics requested that I fly the aircraft 10 hours per Lycoming break-in instructions. At approximately 1730Z on March 17, 2018, I left the aircraft hangar after a complete pre-flight with no evidence of any oil leaks. This was the first flight of the 10 hour break-in session. Upon starting the engine, indications were normal. Taxi and takeoff were normal climbing to 2,500 ft and I stayed in the local area. Due to the heavy traffic at KPGD, I moved outside the airport traffic area to the Northeast. Approximately 35 minutes into the flight, oil appeared on both windscreens blocking forward visibility. At approximately 1820Z, the windscreens were completely covered with oil, and I called the KPGD Tower immediately and they cleared me to land on runway 22. Shortly after, the engine was not developing normal power and required constantly pushing the throttle forward to maintain power. While the engine did not stop, it was not producing power and was still turning upon landing. The KPGD Tower reporting seeing smoke coming from the engine. The glide ratio of this aircraft did not allow me to land on runway 22. I immediately looked for an emergency landing field and made a normal landing, however after touching down, I could not see through the windscreen, and the aircraft hit a small ditch and nosed over into the ditch. I noticed the aircraft engine catch on fire, so I got out of the aircraft and moved away to a safe distance as the aircraft was fully engulfed in flames within 5 minutes. The field caught on fire as well and burned approximately ¼ acre of land. EMS and Fire crews were on scene within 10 minutes of egressing the aircraft.

Pilot: Gerald C. Lewis

Commercial Pilot Certificate: [REDACTED]

Flight Instructor Certificate: [REDACTED]

Total Flight Hours: 3,935.0 Mrs.

Total Flight Hours in Type: 399.8

Aircraft type: Steen Skybolt

Serial Number: WHB-2

Date of manufacture: September 23, 1981

Registration Number: N27265

I certify that these statements are true and accurate to the best of my knowledge.

[REDACTED]
Gerald C. Lewis