

Inspector's Notes

N19MM

Accident

Location: Alexander City, AL
Date: June 24, 2018
Time: 0824 CDT
Aircraft: Vans RV7A
Registration: N19MM

History

On June 24, 2018, about 0824 central daylight time, an amateur built RV7A, N19MM, collided with trees, power lines, and terrain during a forced landing at Pell City, Alabama. The airplane was destroyed. The airline transport pilot was not injured and his 10-year-old passenger received a minor cut to the arm. The airplane was registered to the pilot and was operated as a part 91 personal flight. The flight originated from Falcon Field (FFC), Peachtree City, Georgia at 0830 EDT destined for Alexander City Municipal Airport (ALX), Alexander City, Alabama.

FAA Inspector Dale White interviewed the pilot on June 24, 2018 and he reported the following:

The flight departed FFC about 0830 Eastern Time. He was enroute with his 10-year-old grandson to ALX where the pilot has a vacation home. He had flown the route many times before. VFR conditions prevailed and the route was flown at 4,500 feet msl. At takeoff from FFC, he had about 3 hours of fuel on board, or about 30 gallons. The aircraft holds 42 gallons.

During the preflight, he inspected under the cowling and checked the engine over. He added 1 quart of oil and re-membered putting the oil cap back on. Everything appeared fine with the airplane and engine. He sumped the fuel and that was normal.

First indication of a problem: The pilot noticed the engine running rough. The aircraft is equipped with an electronic ignition system as the primary ignition source. As a backup, it is also equipped with a traditional Slick magneto. In the course of the troubleshooting process, the pilot selected the backup ignition system. This did not solve the problem. He was unable to get the engine to restart. He was nearing the ALX airport but did not believe he had sufficient altitude to reach the runway. He identified a clearing that was

approximately 1,900 feet northeast of the approach end of runway 18. During the approach to the clearing, the aircraft struck the top of a tree and then impacted three power lines that he did not see because they were obstructed from his view by the tree that he impacted. After the aircraft came to rest, he opened the canopy and egressed with his grandson. The airplane was engulfed in flames within seconds of their egress.

The pilot stated that he was not the builder of the aircraft and the maintenance records were left in the wreckage. That was the end of the pilot interview.

Site Observation

The fire consumed a majority of the center of the aircraft. The local fire department extinguished the fire. The propeller blades showed fire damage and there was no evidence of impact damage. The electrical cable that the aircraft impacted was draped over the spinner and there was no signs that the propeller was rotating upon impact with the wires or trees. There was evidence of unburned fuel on the ground in a small quantity. The logbooks that were reported to be in the aircraft were not located.

Dale E. White
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