



MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

Heidi Kemner
Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region Aviation

October 19, 2018

Subject: ERA18LA242
Who: James Duncan – Student Pilot/Owner of the airplane

In a telephone conversation, Mr. Duncan stated the following:

- Less than 7 hours of brand-new cylinders.
- Air works aviation - Brewster, AL, is where the cylinders came from.
- The engine was running beautifully and then the engine quit.
- Performed the preflight, no dirt or debris, no water, both fuel tanks.
- Previous owner was running car gas in the engine.
- Mr. Duncan put 20-25 hours on the engine using 100LL aviation fuel.
- There was no source of fuel contamination at the airport.
- After the accident, the fuel was hand syphoned at the site - fuel taken out of it.
- Gascolator was covered in mud after we slid and we hit the trees.
- That day, we had a scheduled flight for 8
- Wheels up after 8
- Put 1.1 hours on the airplane
- Changed fuel from right to left tank after 40 mins
- Had done a few 3 point landings
- Hadn't done any stalls in that airplane. We flew to power and power off stalls.
- I performed a couple of each.
- We headed back to airport
- My flight instructor wanted me to familiarize myself with wheel landings
- He performed one wheel landing.
- I tried 1 that wasn't pretty
- The second one was better
- We wanted to do one more
- The engine took the power perfectly
- We climbed out and were chit chatting

- We got to 300 ft off the ground
- And it was as if someone had shut the ignition off or reduced the mixture
- There was no backfiring
- It was as if someone had shut the engine off.
- I announced the engine out and Mark took control of the airplane.
- Mark decided to put the airplane into a patch adjacent to the airport
- Everything was going well until we clipped the trees.
- We hit hurt on my side and we still had 50-55 miles of airspeed left
- We slid into the patch
- We knocked the cover off a utility box, but came to rest soon after
- Mark asked if I was ok, I said my back was shot.
- I started doing the post-crash checklist
- Mags off, fuel off
- Egressed out the passenger side of the airplane. Landed on my back on the wing strut.
- Rolled off the strut and hit the ground.
- My guess is less than 8 seconds from engine out to impact
- While on the ground before our last takeoff, we idled for about 10-15 seconds until we decided to do another wheel landing.
- I learned after purchasing it that I found a plastic nozzle, I figured out the previous owner was running auto gas in the airplane. There were brown stains near the gascolators. My thought was that had he run car gas in the airplane, is it possible that car gas debris could have built up in the carburetor and it dislodged while the engine was running and clogged the line.