



MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

Pilot Statement

Peter Wentz
Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region Aviation

Date: 03/26/2019
Person Contacted: Christopher Michael Lee (Pilot)
Present on the telephone: FAA inspector JD Nichols
NTSB Accident Number: ERA19LA219

Narrative:

The following is a summary of a conversation that occurred with the individual named above:

Mr. Lee stated that he had just taken ownership of the airplane and was departing the previous owner's hanger at 5GA3. He performed a preflight inspection but did not sample the fuel from or visually inspect each fuel tank. He stated that on an earlier flight, the previous owner told him that when one fuel tank was 25% lower than the other tank, he would switch tanks to keep the fuel balanced. He started the engine and taxied west to the end of the runway. During the taxi he recalled that one fuel tank was 25% lower than the other tank, so he reached down and switched the fuel selector valve to the other tank. He departed the grass runway to the east. The airplane lifted off about halfway down the 2,500-ft runway with the engine producing 2,700 RPM. About 150 ft above ground level, he reduced the power to 2,500 RPM, but seconds later the engine lost all power. He stated, "my only choice was forward into the treetops" and from take-off to impact was approximately 10-15 seconds.