



## NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

Eastern Region – Ashburn, Virginia

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### RECORD OF CONVERSATION

**Who:** William “Buddy” Cottom, A&P, IA at AMS, Milton Airport

**Date:** November 26, 2019

In a telephone conversation, Mr. Cottom stated that he knew the pilot well enough to consider him a friend. He said the pilot did not fly the airplane that much because he was often deployed. Mr. Cottom said he performed the last condition inspection in August 2019 and noted that the airplane was in relatively good condition. There were no real maintenance issues. Mr. Cottom said that when he drained the header tank, about a half of a standard water bottle’s worth of water was drained from the tank. The water looked like “rainwater” with very little sediment. Mr. Cottom said he completely drained the tank, which had very little fuel in it to begin with and dried it out. He had to add fuel to the tank to perform the post-maintenance engine run. Mr. Cottom did not know how water got into the header tank and was unsure if the pilot had left the airplane outside at any time.

Mr. Cottom said the electronic magnetos were installed in 2018, by another mechanic that was also employed at AMS. He oversaw the installation. Mr. Cottom said the magnetos worked fine until recently when the pilot reported a “big mag drop” on the left magneto. Mr. Cottom did not know how much of a drop in RPM the pilot had when he tested the left magneto. Mr. Cottom said that he removed the automotive spark plugs, cleaned, rotated, and re-installed the plugs. When the pilot retested the engine, the mag drop had moved to the right magneto. At that point, all the plugs were removed, and the pilot purchased all new automotive plugs from a local auto shop. Mr. Cottom then re-installed the new plugs on November 23, 2019, including a new adapter for either the No. 3 or 4 bottom plug. The pilot did another engine run-up and said everything was back to normal. Mr. Cottom said the pilot had planned on flying that day and said he was going to do a long engine run up and make sure the magneto issue was still resolved. Mr. Cottom is not sure if he did a run up that day but said the pilot ended up not flying that day due to a low overcast.

Leah D. Read, Sr. ASI