

From: Nick Kohnen [REDACTED]

Sent: Thursday, August 20, 2020 8:30 AM

To: Miles, Michael (FAA) [REDACTED]

Subject: Re: N3962V

To preface, I am not certain that my memory is 100% accurate as the incident occurred so quickly and it is difficult to remember all of the details accurately. On the afternoon of Thursday 8/14, the grass takeoff area noted in the previous email was used prior to the accident. The grass was dry and wind was calm. The conditions were VFR. Takeoff speed was achieved and a climb rate was established. At some point in the short flight, it was noted that there was inadequate thrust to achieve an acceptable rate of climb and at adequate airspeed. There was very little time to react and landing options became limited as the flight continued (seconds). This resulted in a forced landing in a small horse pasture that destroyed the plane, but saved the pilot and passenger life. The forced landing area was very small resulting in significant damage to the aircraft.

Thank you,
John Nicholas Kohnen

Sent from my iPhone

From: Nick Kohnen [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, August 20, 2020 9:02 AM
To: Miles, Michael (FAA) [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: N3962V

Takeoff and crash site are noted. Will follow with pilot statement.



Sent from my iPhone

From: Nick Kohnen [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, August 27, 2020 7:35 AM
To: Miles, Michael (FAA) [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: N3962V

Good morning Mike,

Flap setting was most likely in the position that they were found at the site of the wreckage. At this point, I do not particularly recall the setting. I think they were up at the crash site.

I don't recall clearing the tree line.

Regarding rate of climb, at this point I don't trust my memory as an accurate source of recollection. I really want to answer the question, but distrust my memory as the event happened so quickly and then ended in abrupt trauma.

I believe that a decrease in thrust from a mechanical issue resulted in the loss of airspeed/climb rate.

It is my intention to fully comply. These questions are very difficult to answer with certainty because of the trauma that was incurred at the crash site.

I'm not certain why, but I am second guessing every aspect of my recollection of the event. It was very traumatic.

Sent from my iPhone



MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

Todd Gunther
Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region

Date: August 31, 2020
Subject: Information from Mr. John Nicholas Kohnen (Pilot of N3962V)
NTSB Case Number: ERA20LA288

According to Mr. Kohnen, He had some problems during the climb from the field he took off from. Once he was airborne, the airspeed bled off and he could not climb fast enough to clear the tree line.

He advised that he did not know how much fuel he had onboard, but he estimated that he had 10 to 15 gallons of fuel per side.

The engine runup was fine, and this was the first time he had flown out of this field.

He had just purchased the airplane on August 8, 2020, and there were no shoulder harnesses installed, and during the accident his 73-year-old uncle, had received a contusion. He wished that retrofitting shoulder harnesses was an airworthiness directive.



MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

Todd Gunther
Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region

Date: September 10, 2020
Subject: Information from Inspector Michael Miles (FAA)
NTSB Case Number: ERA20LA288

Engine Examination

According to Inspector Miles, personnel from the Nashville Flight Standards District Office, examined the engine on August 24, 2020, and September 10, 2020.

Examination of the engine did not reveal any noticeable issues and drivetrain continuity, from the front to the back of the engine was established. Further examination also revealed the presence of a 45° shear lip on the front of the crankshaft just aft of the propeller flange. All the pistons would move when the crankshaft was rotated.

The top spark plugs appeared normal. The left magneto produced spark at all leads. The right magneto could not be turned by hand. Disassembly of the right magneto revealed that the impulse coupling shaft bearing was broken due to impact. However, it would move with difficulty by hand once the cap was removed, no damage to the coupling drive gear or any visible part of the gears seen through the accessory case was discovered.

Fuel was present in the carburetor, and the accelerator pump was functional. The fuel strainer was impact damaged.

Information Obtained from Pilot

According to Inspector Miles, he asked the pilot if he knew the length of the field that he departed from. He said around 2000 feet. Inspector Miles noted that Google Earth showed it to be an estimated 1200 – 1300 feet then a driveway runs in front of it. After the driveway, the terrain climbed 25 feet and then there were trees.

Inspector Miles asked the pilot what airspeed he was at when he took off. He said 50-60 mph.

Inspector Miles asked he if he had the flaps down at takeoff and then retracted them after takeoff. He said yes. He seemed surprised when Inspector Miles informed him that the flaps were retracted.

Inspector Miles Asked him if the engine was running and did, he notice any noise changes with the engine. He said he could not recall any noise changes and did not recall if the engine was running.

The pilot also stated that the airspeed started to decay. He was very specific about that and stated that multiple times. Inspector Miles asked him if he meant engine RPM was decaying and he said airspeed was decaying.

Inspector Miles asked him if there was a windsock on the field, and the pilot stated there was none.