

Inspectors Statement

My Name is Cornelius J. Baker, I am an Aviation Safety Inspector assigned to the West Columbia Flight Standards District Office.

On Saturday September 27, 2020, I received a call from the Regional Operation Center (ROC) about N33859 about 10:30 AM. The aircraft crashed at the Union County airport (35A). The aircraft was experiencing engine trouble with one person aboard. The pilot was transported with injuries to local hospital.

Drove to the Union County Airport and met with Fire Chief Michael Lancaster. The aircraft appears to have been on a northeast heading and turning to the left when the left wing hit a pine tree. The left wing departed the aircraft and the aircraft came to rest on its right side facing in a southwest heading. The right wing was upside down and separated from the fuselage. There was leading edge impact damage to both wings consistent with contact from trees. Post-crash fire consumed most of the cabin area. The propeller did not exhibit any rotation damage. The horizontal stabilizer appears to have broken as it contacted the ground. Flight control cables in the fuselage area appear to be connected at both ends. Fire damage to the instrument panel area made identifying engine controls in its current position impossible. The carburetor air box had melted away.

Interviews were performed of witnesses who were at the airport when the accident occurred. Mr. Jeffery Reynolds [REDACTED] stated he had spoken with the pilot before he departed from the airport around 8:45. It did not appear Mr. Troup performed a preflight inspection, but did perform a brief run up at the end of the runway. The weather at the airport at the time he took off was thick fog. Mr. Troup departed and after about 20 minutes witnesses heard the aircraft come back but was sputtering. Mr. Reynolds said he got a radio and contacted Mr. Troup on 122.7 and Mr. Troup said I am in trouble. Mr. Troup circled the airport several times and at one time Mr. Reynolds stated he had him lined up with runway 23 at one point. The aircraft was experiencing engine trouble as they could hear it was not making power. At the time the tree was hit he was flying low and on a northeast heading.

The local aircraft maintenance technician Larry Solley Jr [REDACTED], was asked if he was maintaining the aircraft. Mr. Solley stated he had not worked on the aircraft for some time. Mr. Solley made the statement that Mr. Troup did not perform annual inspections. Mr. Solley provided me with a copy of the last annual he had performed, it was dated 6-15-2017. An inspection of Mr. Troup's hangar was performed looking for the aircraft maintenance records. No records were found but there was oil dry on the floor in the area the engine would be. Mr. Solley stated that Mr. Troup had changed the oil in the aircraft the day before. There is a question about if the aircraft was insured and Mr. Solley stated that Mr. Troup had told him that it was not.

Received witness statements from Major Coffey with the Union County Sheriff's Office. The County Supervisor decided to move the aircraft and place it into Mr. Troup's hangar and secure it with a lock. Calls were placed to Mr. Troup's cell phone [REDACTED]

and number [REDACTED] provided by the airport manager. Neither numbers were answered and voice messages left.

The aircraft was retained for further examination.

Cornelius J. Baker
Aviation Safety Inspector
SO-FSDO-13

**Cornelius J.
Baker**

 Digitally signed by Cornelius
J. Baker
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