



Aaron McCarter
Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region Aviation

Date: March 1, 2021 @ 1022 local
Person Contacted: Chad Frisby; Next Door Neighbor
NTSB Accident Number: ERA21FA142

Narrative:

Prior to the accident day on Saturday, the owner spent most of the day working on the airplane. They had the airplane out in front of the hanger. His mechanic had arrived earlier in the day. They were doing “many, many” runups. He thinks they were troubleshooting a fuel flow issue, but that is pure conjecture. They did the engine runup for about 2 hours. They did not fly the aircraft that day. Once completed, they put the airplane back into the hangar.

On the following day, Sunday, he saw that the hangar was open, and the airplane was inside. They were clearly going to take the airplane out and do something with it because the hangar is air conditioned.

Three to four weeks before the accident, during a conversation with Larry (pilot/owner) The plane was relatively new to them; they just bought it not too long ago. They had a JPI installed; the owner puts one in all his airplanes. The owner noticed that on climb out, the fuel flow was lower than he had expected. It would go down to “like 5.” But he did not notice it in the performance of the airplane. Frisby stated if it’s not broke, don’t fix it, but Larry wanted to figure it out anyway.

He thinks the engine was a C90 upgraded engine. He had no idea what they were working on the day before during the run ups. The engine sounded perfectly fine. It sounded strong. They probably ran it up 5 or 6 times and it was strong for about an hour. They would run it, run it hard, then pull it back down. And he observed the cowling open occasionally. He also saw the video of the airplane as it took off and the engine sounded strong in the video.

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Date: March 2, 2021 @ 0854 local
Person Contacted: John Marrs; Mechanic
NTSB Accident Number: ERA21FA142

Narrative:

Larry's (pilot/owner) owns Cubs in Alaska that his son will want to fly. He suggested that Larry buy a tailwheel like the Luscombe instead of letting his son fly the Cessna 210, so he could get proficient in tailwheel airplanes. Larry asked John (mechanic) to come and look at "all these tailwheel airplanes." Larry found the Luscombe in Tennessee and asked John to go down and have a look at it. He purchased the airplane in September 2020.

When asked how involved he was as a mechanic for Larry, he stated that he didn't do anything to the Luscombe- and didn't sign off on anything. As a mechanic, he didn't do anything to the airplane that he could sign off; there were no log entries to make. There's nothing in the logbooks after September 22, 2020. He called the seller of the Luscombe and did a pre buy inspection. The seller asked what altitude he was going to fly, and he told him he was going to fly up to 9,500 feet all the way to back to Florida. The seller stated he didn't think the airplane had ever been to 9,500 feet, so he took it up and invertedly shocked the engine which caused a stuck valve; it was repaired prior to taking possession of the airplane; this was the last maintenance item in the engine logbook.

The last tail dragger Larry flew was a Wilderness Flyer- a PA-12 replica with a 125 HP engine. He flew it all the time. Larry had two Piper Cubs, a Moose, and a Cessna 207 in Alaska. He has no doubts about his qualifications as a pilot.

He was not there when they were pre flighting the airplane the morning of the accident. He did not know if anyone else was there aside from the pilot and his son. The cowl has wingnuts and Dzus fasteners. Wingnuts on the right and Dzus on the left. It takes a screwdriver to open the cowl on the left. When you close it, they pop into place, but it takes a screwdriver to lock it into place. On the right side, the wingnuts don't require a screwdriver.

When asked if he was the only one who performed maintenance, he responded “no” and he rarely does. After it was discovered that a new carburetor was installed on January 21, 2021, John was asked if he was aware, to which he responded, “yes.” Larry would have installed the new carburetor himself even though he was not an A&P. Larry had worked (by himself) on his airplane in the past and was sometimes supervised. John stated he was comfortable with his work. Larry told him after the fact, that he installed a new carburetor.

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