



MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

Douglass Brazy
Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region Aviation

October 26, 2020

Subject: N920JL, Grumman AA5, 10/25/20, Baxley, Georgia, ERA21LA030
Record of Conversation – Rodney Hood (FAA Inspector, Atlanta, Georgia, Flight Standards District Office)

Inspector Hood provided the following information on 10/26/20 via telephone:

The pilot and two passengers sustained minor injuries. The airplane sustained substantial damage to both wings.

The pilot performed a preflight inspection and noted no anomalies. He added 12 gallons of fuel, resulting in the tanks being filled “to the tabs”. The pilot had intended a ½ hour local personal flight. The pilot estimated the weight of all 3 occupants and the fuel to be about 650 lb. The weight and balance data in the airplane indicated a useful load of over 800 lbs. The pilot recalled that he followed the checklist for engine start, to include turning on the electric auxiliary fuel pump, check its pressure, and the pump was also on for takeoff. The pilot departed from runway 26 at the Baxley Municipal Airport (BHC). About 500 ft mean sea level, he scanned the instruments and noted no anomalies. The airplane was climbing at about 500 feet per minute. At about 600 ft MSL, he noticed that the airplane did not “feel right” was not climbing, and the airspeed was decaying. The propeller continued to rotate. He then lowered the nose to increase the airspeed, and selected field to perform a forced landing. He did not look at the engine instruments and focused his attention on the field and the forced landing. The airplane struck trees during landing.

After landing, the pilot and passengers egressed, and the pilot returned to the airplane and moved the master switch to off. He did not recall moving any other controls or switches. The pilot recalled that he followed the checklist procedures for the flight, which included turning on the auxiliary electric fuel pump before for starting the engine, and then again prior to takeoff.

Examination of the airplane revealed that the throttle and mixture controls were in the full forward position. The fuel selector was set to the LEFT fuel tank. The left wing fuel tank was breached, blue stains were streaking from the breached area, the accident scene had a strong odor of fuel. The master switch was off. The light switches were all on, the auxiliary fuel pump switch was off.

The airplane owner reported that the airplane had flown about 3 hours after its most recent annual inspection which was performed 3 days prior to the accident.

The FAA inspector sampled fuel from the airport fueling station, the sample was blue and absent of water and debris.

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