



MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

Heidi Kemner
Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region Aviation

November 17, 2020

Subject: ERA21LA042
Who: Mr. Henry Ruzakowski

In a telephone conversation, Mr. Ruzakowski stated the following:

- I worked on that airplane for 15 years.
- ET and I have been friends for decades.
- Sunday - we were finishing up the airplane. It was in annual the month before. I spent a month doing the annual.
- The airplane belonged to a gentlemen in the Netherlands
- He found out years ago they would not allow sea planes in the Netherlands.
- It sat in the hangar for years and years.
- I would run it up occasionally.
- Another guy gave me a call to buy a Sea Bee
- I came across one in Utah
- That one in Utah didn't have a certified fuel system. So, he steered away from it
- I put the buyer and seller together for this airplane and the sale happened.
- Spend month and half on annual. Very in depth.
- Especially when I have a new sale.
- Got it running.
- Troubleshoot some things
- Everything was working fine.
- This last week or so, we need to change out plexiglass that was cracked
- Sunday - 3 PM - lets go out for the test flight
- I test fly every Sea Bee that leaves here
- I took it down runway
- He was in right seat
- Took off went to Lake James
- Set up cruise power
- Everything looked good
- Battery charged
- Everything fuel pressure, oil temp
- EGT a little hot but within range

- Everything looked good pitching and rolling
- Rudder was working well
- I said "Let's make some water landings"
- The pilot was going to do instructing for owners.
- We made some landings
- He is a Sea Bee flight instructor; he has a good understanding teaching someone.
- I have more knowledge about the Sea Bee but I'm not an instructor
- I said "lemme show you this and that"
- The last thing we did
- I said we're 800 ft above the lake
- Going to turn base to final
- Simulate engine failure
- Pull throttle back
- Turn to final
- I said, "You know what I'm talking about, but I want you to see the engine failure instead of teach it"
- You come out a little slow, you have the throttle and save the landing
- We're going to take it to the deck
- Put the nose down 80 miles per hour
- At that attitude
- We're looking at the skyline for the horizon
- Going to slow it to 75
- Looks what's happening now, I'm losing airspeed
- It doesn't like 75 mph
- Got to 80 again
- Fly it right down until you crash into the water
- I asked him to Just watch
- Get to 5 ft and flare
- I made a sweet landing
- We were coming down and slow from 80 mph to 58 to touchdown in 3 seconds
- We have to hit this on the button or you hit firmly.
- I said, "You have to remember how to do this."
- Go back to the house. I said, "ET the airplane is good. Go give the training."
- It was about 4:30 pm Sunday
- Sunset was 5PM
- He needed 30-45 mins to get over to his airport.
- I dipped the tank, twice, 17-18 gallons in the airplane. I said, "Leave the airplane here instead of taking it home."
- He said no. I said "ok. But with the gas you have, you're going to fly home, park it there, tomorrow take off, go do whatever, and then fly back over here to do the training. Instead of doing that, pick him up tomorrow, come over here and pick up gas."
- Then run it to avionics shop the following morning.
- I said "Ed, fuel flow in this airplane isn't accurate. I don't know if it's burning 13.5 gal per hour or 20 gal per hour. I don't know how much you have to go with this."
- He said it'll be fine.

- He took off and left, go home close to dusk.
- He called me and said made it home.
- Everything was good.
- He got up in the morning, I called him at 7:01 in the morning. Talked for 2 mins
- Conversation went, "Hey how you doing. Get over here at my place. How does it look where you are?" He said, "I'm going to go to twin lakes this morning. I'll leave around 7:30"
- Great, I said, we'll talk later.
- The next phone call I made was at 8:19 AM.
- I called him up, the phone rang, "Hey ET, hello?"
- He said "uh yea?", he was very confused. He said "I think I'm hurt. I crashed the Sea Bee." I said "what, are you kidding me?" He said, "I crashed the Sea Bee, I can't see out of one eye, my back" ---- and then the call goes out.
- I talked to him at 8:35 AM; he called me.
- He doesn't remember what that was about.
- He was talking to me, I asked if he was ok. They called EMS out there. I heard sirens in the background.
- I said sit down.
- He said "I crashed the Sea Bee" I said "you're ok now."
- EMS goes in there and grabs the phone.
- They said they were taking the pilot to Winston Salem
- I tried to talk to ET and asked what happened.
- I asked how you crashed short of the runway. He said it might be a fuel thing. I asked if he ran out of gas, and he said I'm not sure.
- He probably burned more fuel going to his place than he thought and he ran out of gas on the way to the airport.
- ET Does not have fuel at his airport.
- I talked to him at the 7:01 call and I think I remember saying to him, I said do you have enough gas? I said dip the tank? He said yea, yea, I have enough to get there. He said he would dip the tank.
- The pilot did not use the shoulder harness in the airplane.
- The cracked paint around the panel was likely where he hit the head.
- The pilot saw the runway, he had the wheels, he had enough sense about him to put the wheels up.
- We fueled the airplane the week before.
- We drained the old gas out of there and flushed it out because it's so old. You don't have access to tank very well. We put on a new fitting. Drained 10 gallons.
- We didn't have a dipstick so we needed to get that.
- We made the dipstick. Marked it 5 gallons at a time.
- We did that with the landing gear in the normal position. It was dipped in a correct configuration.
- We ran the engine a few times.
- He had 17-18 gallons when he left on Sunday.
- It's the airport I live out of. So there aren't any fuel receipts. It comes out of a 10,000 gal tank. We use a filter when we fuel airplanes.
- No one else has had issues with that fuel that they put in the airport.

- Flew for about a half hour - maybe 40 minutes on the test flight on Sunday.
- Landed on the water, got up to 50 ft, came back around and landed, then I circled at high power, did a 3rd landing, he made the 4th go around and landing, I made the 5th landing, the simulated engine out. He had about 18 gallons after that flight.
- He knows that the airplane burns about 18 gallons an hour is approximate. You don't really know until you fly the specific airplane.
- Variable pitch prop
- Based on that, that's the takeoff power sweet spot, power's pulled back, but I don't think we can lean it anymore.
- The fuel flow gauge was all over the place. It wasn't calibrated.
- We never knew if burned 13 or 20 gallons an hour.
- Every engine is a little bit different.
- This was the smoothest running franklin Sea Bee that I've been around.
- And I don't say that often.