



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Timothy W. Monville
Sr. Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region

Date: November 5, 2021
Person Contacted: Christopher B. Roberts
NTSB Accident Number: ERA22LA045

Narrative:

On November 4, 2021, at 1158 EDT, a conference call was made with Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) inspector John Pless, Christopher B. Roberts (pilot-in-command of N172XX) and NTSB (Tim Monville). The call was made to the FAA inspector, who was at the accident site. It was made to the FAA inspector's cell phone of [REDACTED] Mr. Roberts provided a cell phone of [REDACTED] and an e-mail address of [REDACTED]

At the beginning of the interview Mr. Roberts was advised that the NTSB is a federal agency mandated by Congress to investigate aircraft accidents, and NTSB has no authority to take any action against any individual. He was also informed that the purpose of an NTSB investigation is for safety only, and any person NTSB talks with has the right to representation; he agreed to the interview without representation.

He indicated that as part of his preflight inspection the engine oil was at, "7 of eight quarts. I added one quart of 100plus. The empty oil can from the oils being added was left in the back seat and therefore on the ground in front of the plane at the crash scene."

The flight departed Dekalb-Peachtree Airport (PDK), Atlanta, Georgia¹ and proceeded towards his destination which was the Perry-Houston County Airport (PXE), Perry, Georgia. While flying at 1,500 ft mean sea level south of PDK he noted engine issues and advised the controller that the flight was returning. The engine began running rough then quit. He pitched for best glide airspeed and declared an emergency with the controller. He looked for a forced

¹ He indicated that he has a, "...video of the departure and it shows the [tachometer] time and engine management gauges [all] in the green."

landing site, and spotted a four-lane road with no traffic. With powerlines nearby, he intentionally stalled the airplane above them, descended through them then impacted the road coming to rest inverted.

He indicated that he is a mechanical engineer specialized in internal combustion engines. He obtained fuel from PDK, and after fueling which added 10 gallons of fuel into each wing fuel tank which topped each tank, he checked each fuel tank sump drain and the fuel strainer for contaminants but did not find any water. He indicated that he perceived the issues to be fuel related. There was no knocking, but the engine was sputtering like there was fuel contamination.

Inspector Pless indicated that he would check the fuel truck/facility that fueled the airplane.

Mr. Roberts was asked the following questions:

What restraint were you wearing?

Lapbelt only. The airplane was not equipped with a shoulder harness.

Explain his procedures in an attempt to restore engine power?

He verified the fuel selector was on both, and cycled the mixture knob several times. He also verified the primer was in and locked. He pumped the throttle control to engage the accelerator pump of the carburetor but that did not have any affect. The engine turned freely with the starter. He added that the ignition system components consisting of the magnetos were brand new.

Did he have a flight plan filed?

No.

What was his injury?

He sustained cuts and bruises.²

Was the airplane insured?

No.

Was there any fuel leakage at the accident site?

None, now. The right wing which was broken had a fractured fuel line. It was crimped.

Was the propeller damaged?

Yes.

What time did you depart PDK?

0941 EDT.

What was the time of the accident?

0945 EDT.

² During a call with the pilot on November 5, 2021, at 0954 EDT, he indicated that he was intending to go to a hospital to have sutures to close a laceration to his right shin and to a right finger.

NTSB Questions Continued-

What was the usable fuel amount?

He indicated it was about 38 gallons.³

Did the emergency locator transmitter activate?

No.⁴

The call ended at 1218 EDT.

The digest was e-mailed to him for review on November 5, 2021. He replied on November 8, 2021, at 0950 EST with comments that were incorporated into the narrative. The corrected digest was e-mailed to him for review on January 5, 2022, he did not reply. The FINAL version was e-mailed to him on March 16, 2022.

³ According to the airplane Type Certificate Data Sheet, the usable fuel amount was 37 gallons and the total fuel capacity was 42 gallons.

⁴ During an inspection of the wreckage on 11/5/2021 by FAA and NTSB (Virtually), an emergency locator transmitter was not installed.