



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Timothy W. Monville
Sr. Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region

Date: December 15, 2021
Person Contacted: Robert L. "Lynn" McNorton
NTSB Accident Number: ERA22LA064

Narrative:

Mr. Robert L. "Lynn" McNorton was contacted by phone on December 10, 2021 at 1021 EST. The call was made to [REDACTED] He provided an e-mail address of [REDACTED]

At the beginning of the interview he 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 was also advised that the digest would be put into the public domain, but all personally identifiable information (PII) would be redacted.

He indicated at the onset of the call that he is a mechanical contractor with 41 years' experience. He worked on cars growing up and is familiar with diesel engines. He is a "big" air conditioning contractor, a building contractor, and is a certified Florida electrical/mechanical and building contractor.

He provided a home address of [REDACTED] Cantonment, Florida [REDACTED] He holds a private pilot certificate, certificate number [REDACTED] with airplane single engine land and instrument airplane ratings. His total flight time is 2,485 hours and his total time in make and model is 1,294 hours. He holds a 3rd class medical certificate issued July 8, 2021, with a limitation to, "wear corrective lenses." His date of birth is [REDACTED]

He has owned the airplane since 2005¹. Prior to 2005, he owned a 1991 Mooney M20M, so he has “good” hours in the make and model airplane. He had also owned a Mooney M20K, but the 1,294 hours does not include the M20K.

He provided passenger information as: Don Whitman who is a pilot and is 72 or 73 years old. He quit flying some time ago.

He was asked to describe the flights that day, November 15, 2021:

The weather was clear, the wind was from the north at 5 to 10 knots. It was a clear day with great visibility. He has a hangar at Peter O Knight Airport (TPF), Tampa, Florida, and a 2nd home in the Tampa area. He departed TPF at 0830 and with clear weather and 0 ceiling flew to Lakeland Linder International Airport (LAL), Lakeland, Florida. He indicated that there were no problems with the engine during the 15-minute flight. After landing he parked and went inside the fixed base operator (FBO) to meet his passenger (Mr. Whitman). The flight departed for Gainesville Regional Airport (GNV), Gainesville, Florida, and climbed to between 2,000 and 3,000 ft mean sea level (msl). He noticed a high turbine inlet temperature (TIT) reading, reported as “very high which was unusual because he was operating the 270-horsepower engine with the mixture control full rich.” He also noticed liquid on his windshield, not streaking like oil. It was on the bottom portion of the windshield. With the high TIT he was positive the fluid was fuel. At that time he was talking with Tampa Departure and was in the bottom of Class B airspace. He was checking what he could do to lower the TIT reading and confirmed the mixture control was full rich. He reduced power and the TIT reading decreased to an “OK” range, but there was still liquid on the windshield. At that time, he was about 10 minutes into the flight and advised the controller that he wanted to return to TPF. He also advised the controller of the higher temperature and his desire to return to his home airport. The flight, which was not on a visual flight rules (VFR) flight plan but did have VFR flight following continued at 4,000 ft msl or 4,500 ft msl and turned south to proceed towards TPF. At that moment the engine was “OK”, except for the TIT temperature. He told the controller about his situation and decided to stay high, adding that he was still 20 miles away from TPF. He turned to a southerly direction and was advised to exercise caution due to traffic in the airport traffic pattern at TPF. He reduced power to a slow cruise setting, and the engine at that time was still “ok.” He stayed at 4,000 ft msl, and on the downwind leg of the airport traffic pattern for TPF, he noted he still had 34 psig fuel pressure which was normal. He had ADS-B displayed on his map. Everything at that time looked ok for a normal landing, and he reduced power, extended the landing gear and lowered the 1st notch of flaps on the downwind leg. He kept the traffic pattern wide and at the turn from downwind onto base, the engine was “ok.” He turned onto the base leg. While on the base leg at 1,200 ft msl before turning onto final, he added throttle, but the engine did not respond. He pushed the mixture control, propeller and throttle controls full forward, which at full throttle turns on automatically the auxiliary fuel pump. He noted the propeller windmilling. At 800 ft msl, he noted that he would be unable to make the runway due to water south of the airport. He told his passenger about the impending ditching and retracted the landing gear. He maintained a nose-up wings level attitude and hit the water. The airplane bounced on touchdown, and he reported water coming over the cowling but not over the windshield. He reached over the passenger and popped open the door, and after coming to rest both got out of the airplane and were standing on the wing. Neither he nor the passenger sustained any injury.

¹ According to FAA records, the Bill of Sale for the 2000 M20M was dated January 21, 2005.

He had 2 lifejackets on-board. He grabbed one that was behind his seat and gave it to the passenger. He went to reach the 2nd one that was likely in the luggage compartment, and he got in the airplane and laid over the seat but decided to get out of the airplane and back onto the wing. Within 5 minutes the airplane sank, and they were in the water swimming. He held onto the passenger's life jacket. Both were capable swimmers, and within 10 minutes a small Light Sport seaplane (Icon A5) landed behind them and taxied then drifted to them. He added that the wind was from the north. He grabbed onto the airplane and was given a life jacket. He got into her airplane, and the passenger floated away. A Marine Patrol boat responded to the area and rescued the passenger 1st, then came to the float plane and picked him up. Both were transported to a Marina and were checked by the city PD and FD; they were there about 30 minutes. The FD personnel asked both of them if they were injured. He briefed the SD personnel about the event who in turn briefed the media, but little details were provided. They stood around for 30 to 45 minutes and were allowed to go into the Marina where personnel offered them coffee. They departed the Marina about 1430. Prior to leaving both signed documents with the FD advising they were OK and needed no assistance. He indicated that his iPad and iPhone were in the airplane.

He was asked the following questions –

What did he or the SD say to the media?

He did not brief them. The SD did. They said that the flight could not make the runway due to an engine failure. The insurance company (USAIG) told him that the recovery personnel were coming out of Jacksonville or Ft. Pierce and the Marine Control wanted to raise the airplane but asked him what to do with the airplane once it was at land. He thought the recovery would be the next day. He needed to get the passenger home, so his (Mr. McNorton's wife) arrived at the Marina and transported the passenger to Lakeland, Florida. The airplane was removed from the water the same day. He went to TPF airport the next morning expecting the airplane to be there, but it was not there. He indicated that he had personal items in the airplane. The next morning, a FAA inspector talked with him for about 1 hour. The inspector was present when the airplane was removed from the water. During that time he found a cell phone that was still working.

What time did he depart TPF?

0830 local. The flight to LAL was 15 minutes. He landed, went inside, and was there for 30 to 45 minutes. The accident was about 1030 EST. In the Marina there were security cameras, which captured the ditching and the water landing of the seaplane. The pilot of the seaplane was based at TPF.

On the flight from TPF to LAL, describe the altitude flown, power setting, leaning procedure, fuel load, and whether there were any issues-

The airplane had been fueled on 11/14 (Sunday) with him present which topped the pilot's side fuel tank. On the passenger side he added 15 gallons. The total fuel load was about 70 gallons at takeoff. He has an open hangar, and the airplane sits on concrete. Two weeks earlier on a flight from Pensacola International Airport (PNS), Pensacola, Florida, he had about 70 gallons of fuel on-board. After takeoff with full power from TPF he climbed to 2,500 ft msl at 32 inches manifold pressure and 2,400 rpm with the mixture control full rich; he did not lean and does not

lean until about 5,000 ft.² He talked with Tampa Departure. He was transferred to Lakeland Air Traffic Control Tower and landed without incident to the north. He taxied to Signature, got out of the airplane, walked inside, and then went out to his airplane and did a walk around.

Were you present when the airplane was fueled on November 14, 2021?

Yes. He checked the airplane, the tire pressures and there were no leaks. No oil was leaking and there were no signs of fuel leaks.

Was it 100LL?

Yes, he was present.

On the flight from LAL to GNV, describe the altitude flown, power setting, leaning procedure, fuel load, and whether there were any issues-

After takeoff once air traffic control communications were released by LAL ATCT, he contacted Tampa Approach and advised he was at 1,500 ft msl with flight following. He did not lean the fuel to air ratio. He pulled the power back to 32 inHg and 2,400 rpm during the climb. At 3,000 ft msl, he noted the TIT was in the red range. He had previously requested 5,500 ft msl from Tampa Departure, but they held him at 4,000 ft msl.

He has a JPI (digital) engine monitor. He looked at the original gauge and saw the TIT reading on it was high but thought there might be a problem with the gauge. He scrolled thru the pages of the JPI to TIT and saw it was reading the same as the original gauge. At that moment he knew there was an issue. At that moment he noticed moisture on the windshield, and reduced power to 22-23 inHg and 2,300 rpm (still keeping the rpm in the green arc range). He was flying at 140 mph, and after reducing power and manifold pressure he noted the temperature decrease. At that moment he leaned the fuel to air ratio to see if the gauge would respond and it did. He then went to full rich. He then went to 30 inHg and 2,300 rpm but still noted moisture on the windshield. He advised Tampa approach that he needed 4,500 ft msl vs his previously requested altitude for direct to TPF. He climbed 500 ft to 4,500 ft msl, and at that moment executed a 180° turn to proceed to TPF. At that moment everything was fine. There were no misses/pops or skips from the engine. He was 20 miles from TPF.

Air traffic control communications were transferred from Tampa Approach to the TPF common traffic advisory frequency. Prior to transferring the controller said have a good day. The airplane was on the downwind leg of the airport traffic pattern at TPF at that time. He stayed at 4,000 ft msl until in close proximity to the airport and then started descending when the flight was closer in.

What was the fuel pressure on the downwind leg?

34 psi with the mechanical fuel pump. When the auxiliary fuel pump was on the normal fuel pressure is 50 psig.

² He has a chart on his sun visor providing engine parameters for leaning for specified altitudes flown.

NTSB Questions Continued-

Did you turn on the auxiliary fuel pump?

He did not. On the downwind leg he noted 34 psig (which is normal fuel pressure). He added that in the past he had an issue with fuel pressure and noted the engine operated ok to 16 psig.

What was the highest reading he recalled on the JPI?

Over 1,600° F. Red line is 1,600°F. He recalled 1,700°F. He checked the original gauge located on the lower instrument panel too.

What time did he depart the marina?

Between 1400-1430 local. He and his wife drove to Lakeland to drop off his passenger.

Who told the media information about his ditching?

The SD representative which got the information directly from him. The information passed to the media was that the engine quit, and he was unable to reach the runway.

Since owning the airplane had he experienced a high TIT before?

No, because the fuel to air ratio is manually controlled. He has run the engine hot a couple times previously for a few seconds.

Do you lean rich of peak or lean of peak?

Rich of peak because the chart on this visor. He knows what settings are and only leans when above 5,000 ft msl.

Has there been any recent work done to the engine?

His airplane is a 2000 model year. The annual inspection was done in July 2021. After the annual inspection was completed, he noted when flying at high altitudes (10,000 to 14,000 ft), the fuel pressure was 16 psig but there were no engine issues as a result. He talked with his mechanic who said they should change the mechanical fuel pump, and the rebuild mechanic said it would be best to also rebuild the servo fuel injector and manifold valve, which were done a couple months prior.³ During the test flight after the components were installed, the fuel pressure was 34 psig at 12,000 ft msl.

How many flights and hours since the rebuilt fuel system components were installed?

3 or 4 flights and about 12 hours. Two weeks prior to the accident he flew from PNS to TPF with no issues.

Who has the maintenance records?

He does.

³ According to the provided FAA 8130-3 forms, these components were overhauled on September 16, 2021. According to a provided maintenance record entry, the overhauled components were installed on September 30, 2021, and the airplane was approved for return to service.

NTSB Questions Continued-

What engine is installed?

Lycoming TSIO540. He explained the fuel flow transducer was installed between the servo fuel injector and manifold valve.

Did you notice the fuel pressure?

On the downwind leg it was 34 psi. He did not see it after that point. He did know that the engine quit at 800 ft when he attempted to add power, but the engine did not respond when he “came around on final.”

Did he have any questions for NTSB?

Was there any chance for him being there when the engine was examined?

It was explained that is not allowed by NTSB rules.

He was informed that he was required to complete the NTSB Pilot/Operator Aircraft Accident/Incident Report.

The call ended at 1202 EST.

The digest was e-mailed to him for review on December 16, 2021. He replied on December 20, 2021, at 1324 EST with comments that were incorporated into the narrative. The corrected digest was e-mailed to him for final review on January 7, 2022. He replied on January 27, 2022, at 1228 EST with, “Hi Mr Tim [Monville], I did receive this email. I did read and agree with changes made.” The FINAL digest was e-mailed to him on March 17, 2022.



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Timothy W. Monville
Sr. Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region

Date: January 10, 2022
Person Contacted: Ric Riccardi
NTSB Accident Number: ERA22LA064

Narrative:

FAA inspector Ric Riccardi contacted NTSB by phone on December 15, 2021, at 1414 EST. He provided an e-mail address of [REDACTED] He called from [REDACTED]

He indicated that he inspected the airframe and engine on December 9, 2021. During his examination of the engine compartment, he found no loose fuel lines. He did have the cover of the manifold valve removed and noted "white goo" on the top side of the fuel diaphragm of the manifold valve. He had the magnetos removed which were wet; they did not spark on the test bench when rotated. The spark plugs were removed and they were clean with gray coloration. He did check the ignition harness and there were no issues. The spark plugs did not exhibit any signs of an ignition system issue or "missing." He also had the engine-driven fuel pump removed and the drive coupling was ok. All fuel injectors had deposits. He did not recall if there was any fuel in any fuel lines. The fuel selector was in the "off" position. He examined the turbocharger and noted it rotated freely with no damage.

He confirmed that as part of his inspection, he removed the cover of the manifold valve and the fuel injector nozzles. He did not examine the servo fuel injector.

During rotation of the crankshaft by hand, he noted each cylinder had good thumb suction and compression in each cylinder, and crankshaft, camshaft, and valve train continuity.

As part of his inspection he took a couple pictures.

He was asked the following questions-

Did he attempt to electrically operate the auxiliary fuel pump?
No he did not.

NTSB questions Continued-

Did he check the airframe fuel strainer?

It was 3/4 full and was “pretty goey” which looked like it could have been there for some time.

How were the engine baffles?

They were ok.

The call end time was not recorded. He was asked to provide an inspector statement outlining the factual findings of his examination.

The digest was e-mailed to him for review on January 10, 2022. He did not reply.



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Timothy W. Monville
Sr. Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region

Date: January 10, 2022
Person Contacted: Matt Bartle
NTSB Accident Number: ERA22LA064

Narrative:

Mr. Matt Bartle of Florida Aircraft Recovery and Storage contacted NTSB by phone on December 16, 2021, at 1225 EST. He called from [REDACTED]

He indicated that all fuel lines from the firewall forward were tight with no holes/breaks. There was no staining inside the engine compartment. As part of the inspection of the engine with the FAA, he did take the cover of the manifold valve off, and there was a little bit of white “gunky material” found on the top side of the fuel diaphragm. He thinks he did remove the piston/spool of the manifold valve and the parts were put inside a box for safe keeping. There was no water inside the manifold valve. He also took out the inlet screen of the servo fuel injector and there was also “gunky material” on it. The airframe fuel strainer was not accessed. Crankshaft, camshaft, and valve train continuity was confirmed. During rotation of the crankshaft the magnetos were heard to operate. Good suction and compression was noted in each cylinder during hand rotation of the crankshaft. The fuel pump was removed and noted to rotate freely. A little liquid which smelled of 100 low lead fuel was noted in the flexible hoses attached to it. The magneto to engine timing was checked and the left magneto was 25° before top dead center (BTDC), while the timing of the right magneto could not be determined. He did remove the rails for the fuel injectors. He noted the fuel selector was in the “off” position. The engine baffles were in good shape.

The call end time was not recorded.

The digest was e-mailed to him for review on January 10, 2022. He replied the same day at 1013 EST with, “Tim, Those look good as well.” The FINAL digest was e-mailed to him on January 10, 2022.



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Timothy W. Monville
Sr. Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region

Date: January 10, 2022
Person Contacted: Matt Bartle
NTSB Accident Number: ERA22LA064

Narrative:

Mr. Matt Bartle of Florida Aircraft Recovery and Storage was contacted by phone on December 17, 2021, at 0916 EST. He was called at [REDACTED] A Facetime call was initiated at that time.

He indicated that he did not notice the loose b-nut during the inspection with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), rather, he noted it when looking at his photographs of the top looking down view of the manifold valve. He noted exposed threads of the inlet fitting. He confirmed that during his inspection with two inspectors from the FAA, he did not recall looking at that hose specifically. They did remove all fuel injector nozzles which were tight.

He confirmed that nothing was done to the engine between the FAA inspection and the date and time of our phone call. He described the b-nut of the flexible hose at the inlet of the manifold valve as “loose”, but visually it gives the impression because of nearby clamps it is in-place.

There was no torque stripe on the b-nut or fitting, and there was no damage in the surrounding area. It was determined to be 7.5 flats of the b-nut to be finger tight against the fitting, and 15 flats for complete removal of the hose. There was no provision to safety wire the b-nut that was found loose. There was no blue stains on the upper engine cowlings.

It was agreed that NTSB would get additional funding to pressure test the fuel supply system.

The Facetime call end time was not recorded.

The digest was e-mailed to him for review on January 10, 2022. He replied the same day at 1013 EST with, “Tim, Those look good as well.” The FINAL digest was e-mailed to him on January 10, 2022.



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Timothy W. Monville
Sr. Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region

Date: January 10, 2022
Person Contacted: Cody Mackey
NTSB Accident Number: ERA22LA064

Narrative:

Mr. Cody Mackey of Flight Level Avionics and Maintenance Services LLC was contacted by phone on January 10, 2022, at 1114 EST. He was contacted at [REDACTED]

At the beginning of the phone conversation, he 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.

Because of his workload a conference call was scheduled the same day at 1500 CST/1600 EST. He asked during the brief phone call what was found, and he was told that the inlet fuel line at the manifold valve was found 7.5 flats of the b-nut loose, and there was leakage noted at the loose line during postaccident testing.

He was advised that I wanted to talk with him about RII for critical safety of flight issues, and also to confirm if any additional work was done to the manifold valve after it was installed. In addition, he was advised that I would like a copy of the work order associated with the maintenance performed.

The call end time was 1119 EST.

Mr. Cody Mackey of Flight Level Avionics and Maintenance Services LLC was contacted by phone on January 10, 2022, at 1600 EST. He was contacted at [REDACTED] He provided an e-mail address of [REDACTED]

At the beginning of the phone conversation, he was again 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 was asked the following questions-

Explain your title, position, how long, etc.?

He is owner/operator of Flight Level Avionics and Maintenance Services LLC. He started the company in 2019. He holds an airframe and powerplant (A&P) mechanic certificate since 2014. He has been in aviation since 2000. He obtained his inspection/authorization (IA) in February or March 2021. His IA is held by Birmingham, Alabama FSDO.

Explain the work that was done, by whom, and whether that person was supervised?

The work related to installing the servo fuel injector, manifold valve, and fuel injector nozzles was done by him. For background, for a couple years, a handful of times or more over the last few years, the pilot mentioned that the engine had quit when switching fuel tanks. He did trouble shooting and “could not duplicate” the issue. After the latest annual inspection¹ the airplane had been flown. During one flight the pilot later said that it had done it again during level flight without switching fuel tanks. The owner flew the airplane to Pensacola International Airport (PNS), Pensacola, Florida, and told him he did not want to fly it like it was. They did some research and the pilot talked with some Mooney experts and was advised to overhaul the fuel system. He (Cody Mackey) went to PNS, removed the components of the fuel system and sent them out for overhaul. Once they were overhauled, he (Cody Mackey) went back to PNS. And with the pilot’s help, installed the overhauled fuel system components. After they were installed, they pulled the airplane out of the hangar, and did an engine run-up. He also adjusted the mixture and idle settings. The airplane was brought back into the hangar, and the engine cowling was installed. The pilot had told him he had put 12 hours since the overhauled fuel system components were installed.

Was the pilot doing any hands on work himself?

Yes. But he double checked the work that he had done.

Who installed the flexible fuel hose from the servo fuel injector to the manifold valve?

He couldn’t say.

When actually was the work accomplished?

It was done on September 28, 2021. Since he (Cody Mackey) did not have airport access at PNS, the pilot came that day to PNS to give him access and lend a hand. The pilot came by his shop on September 30, 2021, and he brought the check for the invoice for the work performed. At that time he gave the pilot the maintenance record entry for the maintenance records.

¹ Which was signed off on July 13, 2021.

NTSB Questions Continued-

Explain whether there was any work done to the manifold valve after the logbook entry was made?

None to his knowledge.

If there were any issues from the pilot since the work was signed off excluding the accident flight?

No. The pilot called him afterwards to say that everything was working well and there were no issues.

Explain the process used to torque the b-nut and how he obtained the proper torque value?

He obtained the torque value from the Aviation Maintenance Handbook and a chart. He was asked if he recalled the torque value and he said he did not recall.

Explain his process for using torque stripe?

He typically uses it on fuel lines.

What color torque stripe do you use?

Red.

Do you have any pictures of the manifold valve after the work was done?

No.

Explain whether he would have put torque stripe on the b-nut at the inlet fitting of the manifold valve?

He would typically. He was advised that there was no torque stripe found on the b-nut of the inlet fitting of the manifold valve but there was torque stripe for each fuel injector line at the manifold valve. He was also informed that the end of the fire sleeve adjacent to the loose b-nut was deteriorating.

Explain whether his paperwork has discrepancy, and corrective action for each fuel system component installed?

He does not have that type of paperwork and his invoices are not set up that way.

Explain if they have Required Inspection Items (RII) for critical safety of flight items?

No. He is not a repair station. He does not have a program in-place for RII. Sometimes it is just him working. He does currently have a mechanic and sometimes they do check each other's work. At the time of the maintenance to N21890 he had 2 mechanics leave.

Explain if he became distracted during the installation of the fuel system components or if it was done over the course of 1 day or more?

It happened in 1 day. Other than stopping to utilize the human comfort facility, there was no stopping.

NTSB Questions Continued-

When was the 1st flight after the work was performed on 9/28/2021?

He thinks the pilot test flew it on 9/29/2021. He (Cody Mackey) was not there when the pilot test flew it.

Explain how or why the loose fuel line occurred?

He did not know how that happened. Normally he puts torque stripe on fuel lines.

Explain whether it was a long day on 9/28/2021?

He did not recall if he had his truck already loaded up the night before, or if he had to get his tools loaded the day of and then drove to PNS, which would only have been a 30-minute drive. He added it was not a “full day” doing that work. He estimated including the drive to and from taking 4 to 5 hours. He recalled leaving there between 1400 and 1500 hours local.

Was he well rested on 9/28/2021 and did he have any life issues that date?

He recalled feeling well rested and did not have any life issues. He was under the normal stress of owning your own business.

Is there anything he can think of to mitigate the finding of a loose fuel line?

He always goes over his work. He does take pride in his work. RII is a good process when it can be used.

Do you think there was any undocumented maintenance by the owner between 9/28 and the accident flight?

He would not know. The pilot did not mention performing any maintenance to him, but anything is possible.

Between 9/28/2021 and the accident date (11/15/2021) did he work on the airplane?

No. He did not even see the airplane after 9/28/2021. On 9/30/2021, the pilot drove a car to his facility to pay his invoice.

Did he have any questions for NTSB?

No.

The call ended at 1641 EST.

The digest was e-mailed to him for review on January 10, 2022. He replied on January 13, 2022, at 1053 EST with comments that were incorporated into the narrative. The corrected digest was e-mailed to him on January 24, 2022. He replied the same day at 1052 EST with, “Tim, That’s sounds correct to me.” The FINAL digest was e-mailed to him on January 24, 2022.



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Timothy W. Monville
Sr. Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region

Date: January 25, 2022
Person Contacted: Robert L. "Lynn" McNorton
NTSB Accident Number: ERA22LA064

Narrative:

Mr. Robert L. "Lynn" McNorton was contacted by phone on January 24, 2022, at 1055 EST, and left a voice mail message. The call was made to [REDACTED]. He returned the call the same day at 1157 EST from the same phone number.

He was asked to explain his role in installing or helping to install the overhauled fuel system components as reported by the mechanic (Cody Mackey):

He was virtually Cody's helper. The work was done inside his (Mr. McNorton's) hangar since Mr. Mackey did not have any room in his hangar at Peter Prince Field Airport (2R4), Milton, Florida. He and the mechanic removed the parts, boxed them, and they were sent out for overhaul. He helped during the removal and installation. He and the mechanic both put the parts/components on stating both were, "hands on." The mechanic checked, tightened, and inspected the work that was being done.

With respect to the manifold valve, explain who installed it?

He was helping the mechanic. He did not do any work by himself. They were together. He did start to install, "screws and hoses."

Did he install the hose at the inlet of the manifold valve?

No, he didn't install anything himself. Both were, "on-board right there." The mechanic tightened and checked the components after they were installed, and it was the mechanic who last had his hands on the components. He could not be sure if he (Mr. McNorton) started to install the flexible fuel hose at the inlet of the manifold valve. When the job was done, the airplane was pushed outside of the hangar and the engine was test run with the cowling off. The airplane was then pushed into the hangar and the engine cowling was installed. The airplane was test flown the following day, and he added that he had flown the airplane for about 12 hours since the components were installed.

Were any leaks noted during the engine test run after maintenance?

No. He was right there with the mechanic. The top and bottom engine cowlings were off for the engine run that lasted a total of about 15 minutes. The engine was started more than one time. After the engine run was completed, the airplane was pushed into the hangar and the cowlings were installed. He has an enclosed hangar at both airport locations and if there had been a leak, he would have noted it.

Do you recall putting on torque stripe on the flexible fuel hose that installed to the inlet fitting of the manifold valve?

He was unsure of what torque stripe was but after being advised by NTSB, he did recall seeing either blue or red torque stripe on the fuel injector lines on top of the engine. When he and the mechanic were together late in the morning it was a nice day. The mechanic only had a short drive from his shop to the pilot's hangar. They had no lunch breaks although Mr. McNorton asked the mechanic if he wanted to stop for lunch, but he agreed to keep working. There was no rain present when they pushed the airplane onto the ramp for the engine run.

He was asked to explain the data from Flight Aware¹ and how he turned away from the airport? He made the left turn to lose altitude. As he had previously indicated, he kept the flight high approaching the Peter O Knight Airport (TPF), Tampa, Florida, because he had the high TIT reading. He did make a 360° turn² to lose altitude (Figure 1). At that point of the flight there was no engine problem yet. He was still cruising at 160 knots before he began descending³.

At what point did he begin to descend?

He was concerned with the statement from the controller that there was 2 or 3 aircraft in the pattern at TPF. He did initially think about landing downwind at TPF but decided not to because of those aircraft in the airport traffic pattern.

If you had made a right turn instead of the left turn, do you think you could have made the airport?

He did not want to be high on approach and then have an engine issue with no options for landing. He thought he was fine by doing the 360° turn. He was thinking about the aircraft in the traffic pattern. If he had not made the 360° turn, he would have been high on final approach. Normally and by design he drops the landing gear at 140 knots indicated airspeed, but as he had previously said, he kept his cruise speed (160 knots) while en route to TPF. Turning towards TPF from downwind onto base leg probably would have "been a better chance" of reaching TPF. His airplane has speedbrakes but he did not use them during the flight.

¹ The diagram from Flight Aware is an Attachment to this document.

² Plotting of Flight Aware targets on Google Earth depicted he made a 270° left turn.

³ According to the plotted data, on the downwind leg he was about 1 nautical mile abeam the runway and descended from 2,100 to 1,400 ft before starting the left turn. The average calculated groundspeed while on the downwind leg between 1006:22 and 1007:26, was about 160 knots.

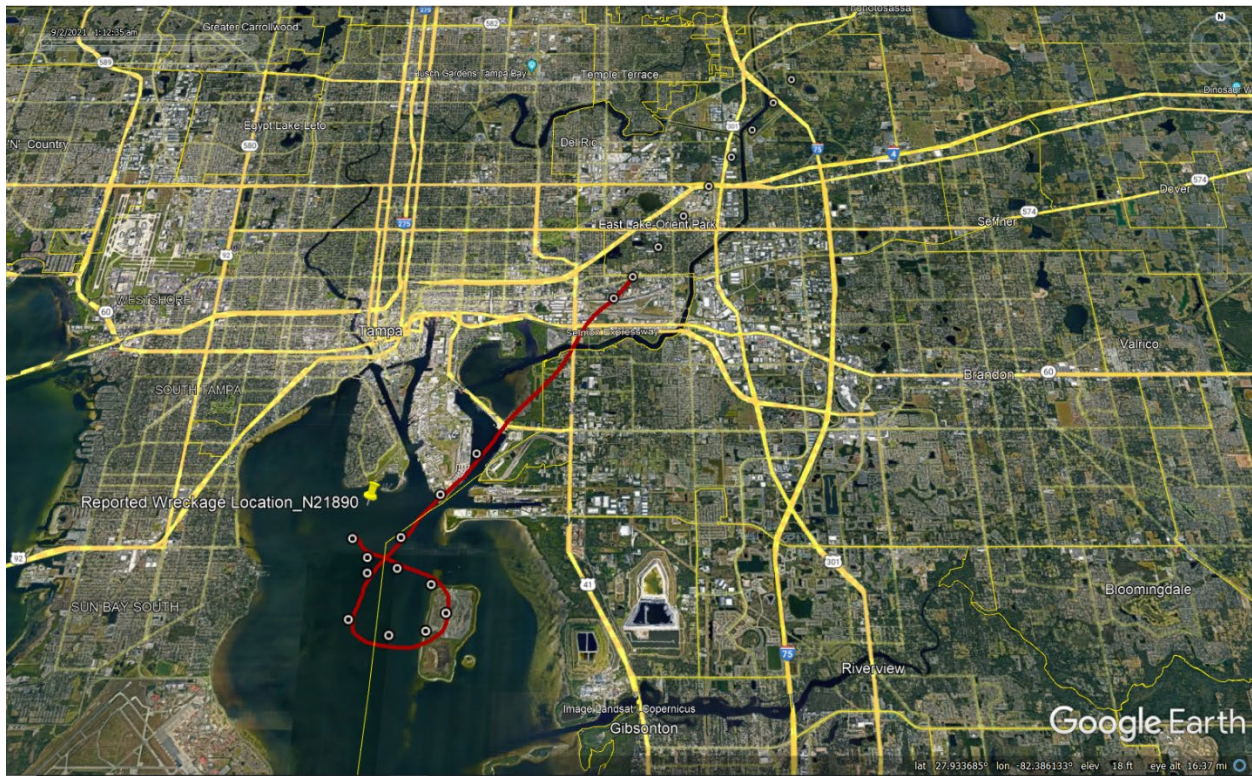


Figure 1: Google Earth Plot of Flight Aware Targets of Accident Flight. Flight Path At End of Flight is Depicted in Red for Clarification.

The call ended at 1247 EST.

The digest was e-mailed to him for review on January 25, 2022. He replied on January 27, 2022, at 1233 EST with, “Hi Mr Tim [Monville], I did receive said email on Tuesday January 25, 2022, at [approximately] 1425 EST. After reading this email/Narrative I do agree with the contents describing the engine repair and landing at TPF/ Peter O Knight airport on November 15th, 2021 at [approximately] 10:30 EST. If You have further questions, comments or information please let me know.” The FINAL digest was e-mailed to him on March 17, 2022.