



MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

Pilot Statement

Peter Wentz
Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region Aviation

Date: 1/19/2022
Person Contacted: Thomas Whitted (Pilot)
Contact # [REDACTED]
NTSB Accident Number: ERA22LA109

Narrative:

The following is a summary of a conversation that occurred with the individual named above:

Mr. Whitted stated he conducted a preflight inspection of the airplane and found no anomalies. He stated that he did add 1 quart oil before starting the engine. He stated that on the day of the accident while starting the engine, it was cranking over and then the prop spun backwards. He didn't recall if he was still cranking the engine or just let off the ignition before the "kick-back" happened. Mr. Whitted stated that he had the propeller governor overhauled in March 2021 and this was the first time the propeller had acted that way since the overhaul.

He stated that about 20 minutes into the flight, the red oil annunciator light illuminated followed by the oil pressure gauge falling to zero psi. He stated the engine was making an over speed sound and the tachometer showed that the engine was well beyond redline, so he pulled back the throttle halfway to reduce engine RPM. He radioed the controller and reported an emergence, then looked for a place to land. He stated that the engine was no longer running and there was smoke coming of the engine compartment. The pilot waited to get as closer to the shoreline before pulling the CAPS. He stated he reached 2000 feet and deployed the CAPS. The airplane descended into the water and the wind started to pull the airplane away from shoreline so the pilot and passenger dove into the water and swam to the shoreline.

The following is a written statement supplied by the pilot on 1/14/2022

1/14/22

N879CD Incident on Lake Murray – 1/13/22

Tom Whitted (pilot/owner) and spouse were going to Charleston, SC for 2 nights. I checked the oil and added one quart. I triple checked the dipstick after it was reinserted. The plane had about 35 gallons of fuel (visual inspection of tanks.) I added 18 gallons before takoff.

We asked for Flight Following to KCHS at 5500 feet. The sky was clear and winds were light. The runup revealed nothing strange.

We took off at 12:59 PM (Flightaware).

Approximately 20 minutes into the flight, the red oil annunciator light came on and the oil pressure gauge went to 0 psi. The tachometer showed that the engine was overspeeding well beyond redline. I pulled back the throttle half way to see if I could save the engine.

I called the KCAE approach controller and told her we had a problem. She said we could land there if that would help. At that point the engine was no longer running and there was smoke boiling out of the engine compartment. I declared an emergency with the controller and began looking for the best place to pull the chute. At that moment we were over the middle of the lake and it would have been a difficult swim. We attempted to get as close as possible to shore before we pulled the chute. When we reached 2000 feet, we were in a pretty good spot so we pulled the chute. That was around 1:25 PM.

When we hit the water, I knew from previous chute stories that the plane would stay up for perhaps 10 minutes. The chute was still inflated and dragging us closer to shore so we stayed in the plane for a couple of minutes. At some point the chute started pulling us away from shore so we jumped in and swam.

The EMS checked us out and were satisfied that we had no injuries.