



MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

Brian C. Rayner
Senior Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region

Date: October 25, 2022
Person: David Bliss – Maintenance Director - Mechanic -
NTSB Accident Number: ERA23FA025 Brentwood, TN
Subject: Piper PA-32-300

Narrative:

Mr. Bliss was the maintenance director for Wingnuts Aviation, LLC in Springfield, Tennessee. He performed the pre- buy inspection on the accident airplane and most of the annual inspections over the 10 years prior to the accident. He installed the overhauled engine in the airplane in October 2012.

Mr. Bliss holds FAA Airframe and Powerplant certificates with inspection authority. He holds a commercial pilot certificate with ratings for airplane single engine and instrument airplane. Mr. Bliss estimated he had 750 total hours of flight experience.

The most recent annual inspection was completed on the airplane, which was based at Springfield Airport on October 4, 2022. Mr. Bliss believed Dr. Wiltcher taxied the airplane over from his hangar to Wingnuts Aviation for the annual inspection.

“The airplane was not washed prior to being brought in for the inspection. We initially start with a customer preference list for oil and other consumables. We do a runup and operational checklist first, then we follow a Wingnuts Aviation checklist specific to the airframe modeled after and referring to the manufacturer’s checklists. Then we check for AD compliance. We use a web-based system for the work orders and run-up checklists.”

The company has an internal procedure called a “fingerprint” inspection at the completion of annual inspections or other maintenance conducted by an employee not involved with the procedure just completed.

Mr. Bliss was able to produce the copies of the maintenance checklists he followed, with his initials in the margins to indicate when each task was completed. These checklists complied with

FAR 43 Appendix D. When asked specifically about the engine oil inlet pump suction screen, he pointed to the entry where he signed it off in the right margin and annotated the part number for the one-time-use crush washer in the left margin.

When asked about oil on the belly of the airplane, Mr. Bliss said there was the usual “path” of oil on the left outermost “channel” that covers the “stiffeners.” He was asked about any obvious leaks and he said there were none. “Leaks tell a story about what’s going on with an airplane, so I’m always looking for wet spots when I do an inspection.”

Mr. Bliss was asked about the nose seal around the crankshaft at the front of the engine and he said there was no wetness there. The engine was “dry” and “clean.”

Mr. Bliss was asked if he had performed any magneto work on the engine, or had to remove a magneto for other maintenance, and he said no. “I installed that engine, and I don’t think we’ve touched those magnetos. We heard he had a rough-running engine, so we were curious if there might have been something with magnetos. We’ve been over the paperwork, and we’ve found nothing with regard to magnetos.”