

Ryan Enders
Aviation Accident Investigator
ERA

Date: March 5, 2024

Subject: ERA24LA122, Pilot Interview

Contact: Howard, William T., Pilot

Mr. Howard was contacted via phone by NTSB IIC Ryan Enders on March 5, 2024. The following is a summary of the conversation:

Mr. Howard was asked about the quantity of fuel that he had onboard prior to take off. His response was 84 gallons, and that is full tanks. He reported that he last fueled the airplane about a month prior utilizing the self-service system that is at the airpark. Mr. Howard was asked if he had a receipt or documentation for that purchase to which he responded that he did not save the receipt, but he used his credit card and would be able to provide that statement. He also described that sometimes he uses portable fuel tanks and a hand pump instead of starting up the airplane and taxiing it to the pumps.

Mr. Howard was asked if he did a run-up before flying to which he responded "yes" and that there were no problems during the run-up. He stated that he did a preflight of the airplane the night before and did not notice anything out of the ordinary. During the preflight, he sumped the wings and pulled the fuel strainer. Mr. Howard was asked about the instrumentation in the aircraft to measure fuel and he responded that there is left, right, and auxiliary gauges, three gauges total. The gauges all showed "full" and worked properly in his opinion.

Mr. Howard was asked if there was any maintenance performed on the airplane recently. He responded "yes" and that new engine mounts, a new/overhauled engine fuel pump, STC for an electronic magneto, and the engine fuel lines firewall forward were replaced just prior to the flight. The purpose of the flight was to ensure that everything was working properly after the maintenance.

The pilot was asked which fuel tank he was on during the accident sequence. He stated that he was originally on the left tank until the engine stopped, he then switched to the right tank and hit the boost pump, but nothing changed. He noted that the engine totally stopped and didn't just reduce RPM.

Additional questions asked:

Where are the logbooks? Answer: In his possession. He agreed to send the logbook entries for the airframe and the engine.

Which tank ruptured during the accident? Answer: The right side.

Do you have any questions for me? Answer: How do I find out what happened. He was only in the air for five minutes.

A discussion with Mr. Howard about the required NTSB 6120.1 form was held and that if anything was found during the wreckage examination that I would discuss it with him.

-End of conversation

An additional conversation was held with Mr. Howard on March 25, 2024. The following is a summary of that conversation.

Mr. Howard was asked if he had a difficult time starting the engine? He stated "no" and that he did an engine runup with no problems noted. Mr. Howard was asked why the fuel system components were replaced prior to the accident flight and he responded that the airplane had an old system that was "out of whack" and he wanted to have it replaced. The fuel hoses were original to the airplane and needed to be replaced. Mr. Howard discussed how he had installed the fuel hoses himself and was worried that the accident may have happened because of the work completed.

-End of conversation