

Lynn Spencer
Air Safety Investigator
Aviation Safety / Eastern Region

Date: April 16, 2024

Subject: ERA24LA179 Record of Conversation

Contact: Austin Jackson, pilot

The following is a record of conversation with Mr. Austin Jackson. Mr. Jackson was called at [REDACTED] on April 16, 2024, and a voicemail was left. Mr. Jackson returned my call four minutes later at 1103 EDT. 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.

At this stage of the conversation, he was advised that for transparency I would be typing the notes and would send them to him for review and comment.

I asked the distance to Rocky Mount, NC and Mr. Jackson stated that it was 220 nautical miles. I asked him to explain what happened. He stated that this was a flight of two airplanes, and they had fueled the airplanes at Delaware Airpark (33N), Dover/Cheswold, Delaware, and it was self-service. He stated that he had the receipt, and that it showed the total fuel purchase that included the two airplanes that were flying together to Rocky Mount/Wilson Regional Airport (RWI), Rocky Mount, North Carolina. He stated that he performed a full preflight inspection and engine runup, and visually checked the fuel tanks. Both were full. The flight was planned to drop off the accident airplane then return in the other airplane. He wore a lap belt and shoulder harness.

He explained that he had flown from 33N at 3,000 ft msl and estimated that the airplane was at 1,800 ft msl when he was setting up for final approach to runway 22 at RWI. When he reduced the power setting for his descent, the engine stopped producing power; however, the propeller continued to windmill. He attempted to restore power to the engine. He confirmed that the fuel selector was set to BOTH, turned on the fuel pump, and moved the mixture to full rich. He attempted to restart the engine with the carburetor heat on and with it off, but the engine did not regain power. He checked his fuel quantity, which showed 7-10 gallons in each tank.

He established best glide speed and performed a forced landing to a road, where he impacted power lines before coming to rest at an intersection.

I asked about his flight planning and the flight conditions, and he stated that they had a headwind for the flight which he estimated at 52 kts at cruise altitude, and about 32 kts as they started to descend. He was cruising at 25 inHg in manifold pressure, or full power, for engine break-in since the engine had just been overhauled prior to this multi-leg flight.

I asked if he had completed a fuel calculation before departure and he responded that the airplane contained 23 gallons per side, and his fuel calculation prior to the flight showed a fuel burn of 30 gallons, with 16 gallons of fuel remaining upon landing. He stated that he would send me a screenshot from the Foreflight App he uses.

After the accident, he stated that fuel was spilling out of both wings and the airplane was canted to a 45° angle. The right wing was leaking onto the ground from where it was impact damaged, and the left wing was leaking fuel near the wing root. He stated that the Federal Aviation Administration inspector observed the wreckage about 10 hours later, when there was little fuel remaining.

The call ended at 1144 EDT

The following questions were asked/responded to in e-mail exchanges:

Q: Do you recall how long had you been in the descent, and at what power setting, when you lost engine power?

A: I was in the decent for a couple minutes and took my power to 20 inches of manifold pressure

Q: When you initiated your descent from cruising altitude, did you use Carb Heat, or did you try the carb heat after the engine failed?

A: I used carb heat on the decent down then confirmed it was on for the configured to land. And after the engine failed I tried it with it on and off to restart.

The following follow-up question was posed via a phone call on June 1, 2024:

Q: When you secured the airplane after the forced landing, did you move the fuel selector?

A: Yes, I talked to the fire fighters and received their permission to move the fuel selector to OFF, and then did so.

The digest was e-mailed to him for review on April 16, 2024. Additional questions were posed via e-mail and via phone. The final digest was e-mailed to him for review on June 11, 2024. He replied on June 11, 2024, at 1543 EDT with no suggested edits. The final digest was e-mailed to him on June 12, 2024.

I have read and understand the Pilot's Bill of rights. I was taking off from 33N^{full} (Delaware airport) at approx. 8:30PM 4/14/24 destination airport KRWI (Rocky Mountain airport)

I was 5NM nautical miles away from the destination airport descending ^{from} 3000' MSL. I was ^{at} 1300 MSL (1458 AGL) above the ground. ^{at this time we were} I took procedure in setting up to land. Mixture full rich, Throttle from 25" manifold pressure to 20 inches of manifold pressure slowing down the aircraft in my descent. Prop was full forward position. Flaps still at 0° at ~~100~~ 100 KIAS slowing down to get ready to put flaps in. ~~As I~~ All green indications on ~~engine~~ temp and oil pressure. As I reach for the fuel pump I had complete loss of power to the engine. At this time I was 1000' AGL descending and pitched for best glide speed with a windmilling propeller. I tried to trouble shoot with restarting the engine and did not turn back on. ~~I then~~

I was straight in for runway 22 and turned onto the straightest road I could find. Secured and shut down engine 400-300 AGL descending at 70MPH.

I landed and put it down on the street avoided a vehicle on coming traffic in my attempt to avoid I had set plane ~~on~~ down sometime around that time, I had struck a telephone pole and lost all directional control. Shortly after plane came to a stop I exited the aircraft. Everything was a blur as I was exiting aircraft I verified securing procedures and immediately brought to other side of road by bystanders and attempted to keep area clear but there was so many people around the aircraft picking things up and trying to get inside. My concern was to get my things and get to safety.

Prior to departure we had ~~we~~ topped off the aircraft at 33N (deleware airport)

① The road ended up being w Raleigh Blvd 1200
I landed NE bound at intersection of Nashville Rd and w Raleigh Blvd 1200

 4/15/24