

Statement re: N1428P, PA-23, Accident at KHLN, January 8th, 2020

[REDACTED]

Airman certificate [REDACTED]

On Wednesday, January 8th, 2020, I departed KHLN at 1500 MST on a dual instructional flight with an applicant training for his AMEL commercial add-on checkride. This was the 4th instructional flight of the day in the airplane. Maneuvers included the feathering and unfeathering of one engine in flight, which we conducted at 3000 AGL in the practice area, about 6 miles NNE of the airport. After feathering the left engine, and after making 4 attempts at a restart, we were unable to restart the left engine. We turned toward the airport, contacted the tower and were instructed to report a 2-mile right base for Runway 27. We extended the landing gear manually, reported a 2-mile right base, and received our landing clearance.

We were unable to hold altitude while flying at V_{YSE} with full power on the right engine. I executed a successful off-airport landing in a stubble field $\frac{1}{2}$ mile east Runway 27. The airplane was undamaged, and I was able to restart the left engine and unfeather the propeller. I instructed my student to walk the short distance to the FBO.

I selected a takeoff path aligned SSW-NNE that I estimated would allow 3000 feet for the takeoff run, with a slight downhill grade, with no obstacles in the departure path. The surface was hard, frozen ground, free of snow, with 4-inch alfalfa stubble. I taxied to the edge of the field, held the brakes, applied full power on both engines, released the brakes, and began the takeoff roll. Approximately 700 feet into the takeoff roll, I encountered a shallow rut from an irrigation pivot, which collapsed the nose gear, causing the propellers to strike the ground at takeoff power, resulting in substantial damage to the fuselage forward of the wing.