



RECORD OF MEMORANDUM

Tealeye Cornejo

Air Safety Investigator (Field)

Western Pacific Region

Date: August 10, 2020

Person Contacted: Steve Cox

NTSB Accident Number: WPR20LA161

Narrative:

Ms. Cornejo,

Thanks to some collaboration with Mr. Lawver (FAA, Cc'd), I'd like to offer some data that could help with the investigation of N8359D. As my statement says, I was flying with the fuel selector valve on "AUX" when I decided to execute a low approach at Cascade Locks Airfield. I saw a person on the runway which caused concern and so I didn't accomplish a normal low approach. Instead, I kept the landing gear retracted and leveled off to avoid scaring the person on the runway. This caused me to divert from my normal habit pattern of conducting an approach/landing "GUMP" check and I didn't switch to a main fuel tank before pushing up the power when the aircraft pitched up. The AUX tank has a limitation of "Level Flight Only." I presume this is because of the potential for un-porting fuel due to the forward location of the fuel pickups in the aux tanks.

Of course, I'd like for you to find a mechanical failure that caused the loss of power, but I fully admit my error for executing what looks a lot like a low approach on the AUX tank and believe that this could potentially have caused the loss of power leading to the accident. Please let me know if you have questions and see the attachments.

Regards,
Steve Cox



RECORD OF MEMORANDUM

Tealeye Cornejo
Air Safety Investigator
Western Pacific Region

Date: June 3, 2020
Person Contacted: Steve Cox
NTSB Accident Number: WPR20LA161

Narrative:

During pre-flight planning I calculated that there should be 33gal total, 26gal usable fuel on board the airplane. When I arrived at the hangar, I noted the airplane to be in good physical condition with no signs of leaks that occurred while I was on a 6-week military deployment. I conducted a thorough pre-flight of N8359D, I noted visually that the fuel tanks had the following amounts of fuel:

Left aux tank was approx 40% full
Left main tank was approx 50% full
Right main tank was approx 60% full
Right aux tank was approx 60% full

I sumped the fuel tanks/lines/selector valve noting clean fuel with no water then lubed airframe hinges with LPS 2. The oil level was at 9qts. I noted the tach time when we boarded the aircraft was 2493.15. My passenger and I departed KTTD on May 17, 2020, about 11:15. A normal VFR takeoff on runway 25 and right downwind departure was accomplished. The fuel selector valve was set to LEFT MAIN. We flew NE up the Columbia River Gorge on a pleasure flight at generally 1,000 ft AGL, 7 gal/hr., 120KIAS. I switched the fuel selector valve to AUX approximately 20 minutes into the flight. We turned around at Lang State Park to fly back to the SW. I wanted to familiarize myself with Cascade Locks State airport as it is in my home area and I consider it a divert airfield. I tuned to the CTAF frequency and announced my location and intentions to accomplish a low-approach to RWY 24 noting light and variable winds and no traffic. I set up for a 2 mile straight-in and saw a human standing on the north side of the runway approx. 2/3 to 3/4 down. I decided to leave my landing gear retracted and leveled off at approx. 100 ft to avoid any sort of conflict and to avoid scaring the person. I selected approx. 60% flaps and overflew the runway noting the person crossing under the

aircraft's nose to the south side of the runway and into the grass. I thought it was odd that the person did not look up until I flew abeam the man who then glanced up before disappearing under my left wing. The young man was dressed in all black with strawberry blonde hair and beard, sunglasses, and carrying something that looked like a camera. After overflying his relative position, now about 3/4 down the runway, I advanced the throttle to full and selected flaps up as the aircraft pitched up into a climb. Approximately 1 to 2 seconds later, I felt a lack of acceleration and the engine volume decreased. I immediately leveled off and moved the fuel selector valve from AUX to RIGHT. I scanned ahead for a suitable landing sight. Without looking down, I pushed the throttle, mixture, and propeller levers to full forward, noting not much movement as they were already full forward or close to it. I was aligned with the rocky shoreline and decided that turning left or staying straight would not be suitable landing areas. I immediately pushed the yoke forward to ensure flying airspeed and rotated the yoke gently to the right to avoid the shoreline rocks and approaching jetty. I selected flaps down and began the flare while rotating the yoke to the left to level the wings. We touched down and decelerated rapidly with the landing gear retracted. I asked my passenger if she was okay to which she answered, "Yes." We unbuckled our restraints, and I noticed water at my feet. I reached over with my right hand and rotated the door handle and pushed the door open. I quickly glanced inside the cockpit looking for my iPhone. I couldn't find it and we egressed to the right wing, standing. We assessed our location and a fisherman on the jetty holding a large fish offered to cast a line to us, but the aircraft was sinking too rapidly. My passenger and I entered the water and swam approx. 20 yards to the jetty and sandy beach. We were greeted by Samaritans. I turned around to see the empennage and V-tail oriented vertically into the air, the rest of the aircraft was submerged.

Regards,
Steve Cox

