



MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

Investigator Name: Albert Nixon
Title: Senior Aviation Accident Investigator
Division: Aviation Safety – Western Pacific Region

Date: 5/8/2022
Subject: WPR22FA173
Contact: FAA Aircraft Accident/Incident Preliminary Notice from ZLC

Summary of email.

- Aircraft VFR At 1950:09z N801DT checks in with R31. R31 makes several more attempts over the next 2 minutes.

- At 1952:36 N801DT makes contact with R31 and amends destination to KBOI. R31 switches the aircraft to 118.05.

At 2000:06 R31 loses radar contact and informs N801DT that "radar contact is lost". R31 attempts contact with no response.

- R31 begins relaying through ASA125 and ASA reports N801DT declares minimum fuel.

- At 2004 N801DT makes contact and declares critical fuel due to a fuel leak.

- R31 advises the Owyhee airport (10U) is behind the aircraft. No response. R31 begins relaying through AAL2506. AAL2506 stated they will not be able to make it to the 10U airport and would attempt U91.



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Date: 6/6/2022
Subject: WPR22FA173
Contact: BC FBO (Nelson Guelbenzu)

Summary of email.

- Mr. Martin never gave a specific reason for leaving some extra room in the tank. Typically, we are trained to leave some extra room because the fuel expands in the heat, causing the tank to overflow.

- I assumed this is why he wanted some room left in the tank. I filled both tanks the same way, about 2 inches from the top of the tank. There were no other auxiliary tanks that I was aware of. And both tanks were filled to Mr. Martins' requests on May 8, 2022.



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Investigator Name: Albert Nixon
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Date: May 12, 2022
Subject: WPR22FA173
Contact: Mike Radomsky– CFI and acquaintance of pilot (N801DT)

Summary of email:

- He flew with the accident pilot in what he believed to be the two most recent flights prior to the accident.
- The accident pilot and him both noticed that the left wing felt very heavy on a flight to Lake Havasu City.
- The accident pilot thought it was because a fuel imbalance. At times, it took almost maximum effort to keep that wing up.
- There were times that he used both hands to keep the wings level.
- They switched controls of couple of times, so he could experience flying the airplane and give the accident pilot a break.
- On a trip back to Boulder City Municipal after a fuel top off, the control was somewhat better but neither pilot could trim the airplane “hands off.”
- He described the feel of the airplane as very heavy especially in the roll.



MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

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Date: April 25, 2023
Subject: WPR22FA173
Contact: David Turner – Previous owner of accident aircraft (N801DT)

Summary of conversation.

- He was an ATP rated pilot and had about 22,000 hours of flight experience.
- Previously owned the accident aircraft about 14 years.
- Comp Air 8 kit airplane – Purchased the builder assist program with the kit. He assisted in different aspect of the build but did not build any part of the aircraft by himself.
- The Fuel System – wet wings and 230 gallons total.
- There was also a header tank by the pilot's feet that held about 7 gallons.
- He had no major fuel imbalances in the 14 years of flying the airplane.
- He would turn off the autopilot periodically to check for fuel imbalances and if fuel need to be balance, he would then turn off the fuel valve for the low side until back in balance.
- He would turn on both fuel levers for normal operation.
- The fuel cross-feed was used only in emergencies.
- During refueling, he would leave about 1 inch from the top.
- Only minor maintenance was accomplished on the airplane while he owned it. He had aa repairman certificate for the Comp Air. The only maintenance he performed by himself was to change out an ignitor box, change batteries and change a tire.
- The engine had an "Iran" comprehensive inspection accomplished just before it was sold.

- The new owner paid for airframe annual inspection being accomplished on the day of delivery.
- He did no cold weather or high altitude flying in the airplane.
- The highest altitude he flew the airplane at was about 11,500 ft - 12,500 ft.
- The airplane's flight duration, at that altitude was about 4.0 to 4.5 hours, at a range of about 800 miles.
- The best fuel consumption was in the mid to upper tens.
- He would not use Prist in the fuel for the altitudes he was flying.
- He said that the fuel totalizer was manually set but was very accurate. Additionally, he said the individual fuel tanks quantity gauges were accurate.
- There was a low fuel warning light for the header tank fuel quantity.
- The airplane is instrument certified but had no anti ice equipment beside the pitot heat.
- There was no Oxygen equipment on board the airplane – he carried his own portable bottle if required.
- He had been in touch with the accident pilot on questions he had about the airplane.
- A few weeks after the accident pilot purchased the airplane, he reported that a FBO tried to refuel the airplane with Jet-A fuel, but he caught it and subsequently the fuel was drained, and the fuel filter replaced. No issues were noted afterwards.

The only issue that the accident pilot mentioned before the departing on the day of the accident was asking about the freon in the air conditioning.

- He sold the airplane to the new owner in November of 2021.
- His engine mechanic theory was that the airplane's fuel tank vents on the fuel caps iced up, which created a vacuum in the fuel lines and cracked the header tank. His mechanic personally witnessed a similar occurrence on a Lancair.