

Zach Woznicki Statement
N718TB Emergency Landing on Saturday 7-16-2022

My father, mother, and I traveled to Montgomery Gibbs Airport to pickup N718TB from its finished Annual Inspection performed by Gibbs Service Center. Upon arriving at the aircraft I performed a pre-flight inspection, including removing the engine cowling and visually inspecting the engine. The oil was checked and was at 9 quarts. I then refastened the engine cowling. The brakes, landing gear, and control surfaces were all inspected and appeared operational. I then started the airplane and all systems appeared normal. I listened to ATIS and then I soloed the airplane to Crownair Aviation self service fuel where I filled the wing tanks on both sides to the 28 gallon marking on the inside of the fuel tank. This left the plane with approximately 56 gallons. I sumped both fuel tanks, the fuel looked acceptable. I then disposed of the sumped fuel, it was not returned to the tanks.

Upon restart I listened to ATIS again, confirming they were currently not allowing pattern work. I contacted ground control and asked if an exception could be made, explaining this was the first flight after the airplane's annual. Ground cleared me to taxi to 28L, where I proceeded to perform a full run up which included mag check, prop check and control surfaces. Everything appeared normal. I received takeoff clearance and performed one lap in the pattern.

At this time another plane that was landing confused 28L and 28R. Tower switched my landing clearance to 28R and upon landing informed me they could not accommodate any more pattern work. I proceeded to taxi back to Gibbs Service Center. On the way I asked if pattern work would be allowed at Montgomery the following day, Sunday 17th. They told me they would not be able to allow pattern work. I then shutdown at Gibbs Service Center and discussed with my father how we should proceed. We decided that since everything had appeared normal, to continue with our planned flight to Fullerton Airport where N718TB is based. My father and I then boarded the aircraft to depart. I setup flight following with Montgomery ground and taxied to 28R, where we performed another run up. With all systems normal we took off.

The climb out of Montgomery to our planned altitude of 6,500 was normal. We seemed to be making good power and easily cleared the coastal cloud layer. All engine instruments appeared normal. As we were heading north along the coastline there was a heavy marine layer below us. It was at this time the engine made a noise and appeared to stutter over the course of only a few seconds. I immediately made a mayday call to SoCal flight following that we had lost our engine. They asked if we wished to divert to Oceanside or Palomar, although Palomar was IFR. I chose Palomar as it was closer and had emergency services. I checked our instruments and it appeared we still had RPM and Manifold Pressure. I interpreted this as the engine was still running. I informed Flight Following we appeared to have at least partial engine power but requested we get down as soon as possible. I attempted to navigate towards the edge of the marine layer in the direction of Palomar, in the hope I could either get clear of the layer and maintain VFR into Palomar or line up on the runway centerline before descending through the clouds. Flight Following then switched me to Palomar Tower.

Tower asked me what I wished to do and if I would like a VFR heading. I explained I was trying to make the edge of the cloud layer but would take a heading. They gave me 350 which would line me up for a base entry to runway 24 and I attempted to follow it but it was at this time I realized we were losing altitude, despite throttle, prop, and mixture being full forward. I

informed Palomar we were unable to maintain altitude and we need to land immediately, with the intent to head direct to the runway.

Unable to maintain altitude I did the best I could to maintain airspeed while also navigating towards Palomar. We had no ground reference as we were above the marine layer. It was at this point I realized we would not be able to make the airport. We were descending quickly towards the cloud layer and I informed tower. We then passed through the cloud layer. Upon exiting the base of the clouds we were above homes on a hilltop. There were hills on either side of us as well with houses spread throughout. A reservoir to our right and a road ahead of us were the only open areas. The road sloped up the hill and I realized we had a very small clear area we could reach with our altitude. I could see two intersections both with cars stopped at red lights in the direction we were traveling. I made a judgment call to aim for the first intersection, with the intention to touchdown under the traffic light as this would give me the most room to land while keeping as much distance from vehicles waiting at the light and crossing the intersection as possible. For this reason I delayed lowering my gear and did not lower flaps in the effort to keep enough altitude above the stopped cars before the intersection. When I deployed my gear I did not have time to lower flaps. When we touched down I applied the brakes as hard as I could. We impacted a sign in the median of the road with the left wing. Ahead at the second intersection was a line of cars across three lanes. I realized we may not stop in time. The right side turn lane was open and I angled the plane towards that gap in the effort to minimize any impact for everyone. A car ahead dodged across the lanes and took the right turn lane. They thankfully continued through the intersection, I do not remember if they turned or went through the red light. We then clipped the right rear end of a Lexus SUV and our left wing came off. We also hit a sign that did damage to the right wing. We slid to a stop in the intersection towards the right side.

I attempted to radio Palomar tower in the hope we could get emergency services to us quicker and was able to get in contact with them. I informed them we had landed and hit a car, but everyone appeared to be ok, as they were getting out of their vehicle. Tower asked me what street we were on and I told them Rancho Santa Fe Road. The prop was not spinning at this time and we safely exited the airplane. I then secured the airplane as best I could, turning off all switches and removing the key. Bystanders checked on us and the vehicle we hit to make sure we were okay. The fire department was there within minutes and secured the plane. The fuel selector was turned off however the plane still had a small fuel leak and I believe the fire department tore open the fuel selector valve in an effort to stop it but were unsuccessful. Sometime later Hazmat arrived on the scene and together with the fire department were able to drain the fuel into a drum. The plane was then loaded onto a flatbed truck and escorted to Palomar airport where we left it in the custody of Palomar Airport Fire Department.