

This is Christopher Cardoza's statement on the airplane accident in the Piper aircraft N9687J on January 15, 2023. On January 15th a cross country flight to Torrance Airport then back to Montgomery was planned to occur in 9687J. There were 4 people aboard the aircraft including Chris, Jullien, Staci(another student of Chris), and a personal friend of Julliens.

Prior to 15th on January 13th I had another lesson on the same plane with another student Jerome Santos. Jerome is a 40 plus hour student who has already soloed and is preparing for his PPL checkride. Jerome decided to join Plus One to fly the same model/type Archer 180s in the club that he had already been doing his training with me in a separate flight schools Archer 180s. During his training with Chris, Jerome was taught all aspects of preflighting PA28 Archers including how to check if the cowling latches were properly secured. During the lesson on the 13th it was found the battery was dead during Jerome's preflight. It was decided to call for a jump from Crownair since there had not yet been a response from the owner. The plug in for the jump cables was believed to be located in the rear of the plane. But since this was the first time I had performed this he wanted to double check and make sure it wasn't a plug located in the cowling. I then proceeded to remove the cowling and confirmed this. Upon reattaching the cowling I then verbally confirmed to Jerome the latches had been placed back on the aircraft per his previous instruction on how to do so in previous lessons. This was confirmed by Jerome by him reiterating how he had latched it via the previous instruction he was given on how to do so. When it was found the plane could not be jumped Jerome and I decided to not continue on with the flight in N9687J. The issue was then squawked for maintenance.

The next flight lesson I had on N9687J was on the 15th with Jullien. The flight planning and appropriate (91.103) checks had been made leading up to this flight and discussed between Chris and his student Jullien. Before I had arrived Jullien began to preflight the aircraft per what he had been taught. It was agreed to fly IFR if necessary or VFR if possible. This decision was made due to Julien wishing to pursue his IFR license as well as VFR license. If flying IFR were to become necessary it was previously discussed that I was to primarily fly the critical parts of flight while Jullien observed and learned.

The morning of the 15th Jullien arrived before me to preflight the plane. Upon arrival of the aircraft I visually inspected it to confirm it was safe to fly. During this visual check I saw the latches were properly clipped. I then continued on to discuss the preflight and cross country with Jullien. During this discussion it was confirmed that he and the plane was safe to fly. This included a review of:

- Preflight items:
 - A review of 91.203 for kmyf to ktoa as well as a foreflight briefing of our XC flight (this briefing is still saved and dated):
 - Notams, Weather, Known ATC delay, runway lengths, fuel requirements, takeoff landing distance, alternates.
 - PAVE
 - Pilot/passenger conditions via IMSAFE
 - Aircraft condition via:
 - A full review of his preflight:

- Flaps and ailerons
- Tip and leading edge of the wings
- Fuel quantity (tanks were full) and fuel vents
- Fuel sump (sumped from both wings and from the fuselage sump; blue color liquid, no debris and/or water)
- Struts, tires, brakes
- Windshield (clear)
- Cowling was properly latched, with knobs being horizontally placed
- Oil quantity was ~ 7 qts which is within expected range according to this airplane's checklist; oil was thick/viscous and charcoal black in color)
- Prop was intact and edges were clean
- Alternator belt had appropriate tension
- Air inlet was clear without any foreign objects
- Electrical systems such as lights were operative
- Stall horn was operative
- Pitot tube
- Aft fuselage and empennage including manual check of a stabilator and an anti servo tab
- Vertical stabilizer
- Antennas were visually inspected
- Baggage door was opened by me to store the aircraft cover.

- A review of the the airplane was airworthy via AVIATE
- A review of AROW in which it was determined the documents were on board and the weight was within limits.

- Environment was found to be VFR all the way to Torrance
- No external pressures were found

As we continued and everyone arrived we all boarded the aircraft and proceeded to continue on with the flight. It was decided to fly VFR after it was found that weather was forecasting VFR flying all the way to Torrance and back. And if in fact we encountered IFR conditions we would pick up a pop up IFR flight plan. We then proceeded to get flight following instead of picking up our IFR flight plan. And if we needed to fly IFR on the return route we would do so. A SAFETY briefing was also given to the passengers. It was also found the GPS was within date.

We continued on and the checklists were followed for startup and taxi. We received the ATIS and requested flight following since we decided not to file IFR. We then continued to taxi out to 28L during which point I completed IFR instrument checks in case it was necessary to fly IFR. Then we arrived at the 28L runup area and performed the run up using the checklist. It was confirmed the primary instruments were our G5 instruments. During the run up all check items

were found to be satisfactory. We then reviewed takeoff emergency procedures. After completing this we requested to get our takeoff clearance and takeoff.

We continued to take off at approximately 10:22am local and did so properly and as expected. During takeoff right after rotating and becoming airborne the left side of the engine cowling became undone. The cowling flapped up vertically. Once this had occurred a positive exchange of controls was made between Jullien and I, and I then attempted to reduce power, relieve stress on the cowling and land back on the field. It was quickly realized this was not going to work. After realizing an aborted takeoff was not the solution a go around was attempted and full power was put back in. Following the go around a 20-30 degree turn was attempted by me to try and make runway 23 because the engine had not lost power but the plane was sinking so runway 23 was first to come to mind as an alternative. This was found to not be possible either because the plane continued to sink and an off field dirt landing was made. The dirt was muddy and the wheels sank in it which is believed to cause the right main to break on landing. During the turn, safe speeds and coordination of the aircraft were maintained to avoid putting the plane in a stall or spin. After the forced landing all four passengers exited the aircraft via the briefed procedures and then tower was called to inform them all four passengers were unharmed. Emergency services including firefighters and an ambulance came out to assist.