

Eric M. Gutierrez
Air Safety Investigator
Western Pacific Region

Date: February 3, 2025

Subject: WPR23LA094, Memorandum for Record

Contact: Shane Parkhill, Flight Instructor

The following is a synopsis of the information provided by Shane Parkhill in an e-mail correspondence.

Jason and Shane initially met on 01/18/2023. Jason is from Michigan and was in town for a convention. The goals for the meeting were to determine Jason's pilot level and to do some flight planning. It was obvious that Jason was an experienced (about 550 hours) and competent pilot. He was hoping to see SoCal from the air and get some experience in complicated airspace. Shane was to help facilitate that. They went over all necessary information for the flight and decided to meet around 0645 the next day.

The weather for the day was great for flying. KMYF ATIS (coded J) was reporting winds calm, clear skies, good visibility, 05C temperature, 30.15 altimeter setting. Forecasted weather was more of the same - cool weather, no ceiling, good visibility, and light wind.

They met at the airport at 0645, planning to depart KMYF for KSNA shortly after 0700. They began the preflight inspection and determined the aircraft to be in a safe condition for flight. The dipstick indicated the engine had 6 quarts of oil. Startup and taxi were normal. During taxi, they requested KMYF ground to coordinate VFR Flight Following. Run-up checks prior to takeoff indicated all systems were operating normally. All engine gauges were green. They briefed our takeoff and emergency procedures: no sudden turns below 500 AGL, pitch for best glide, egress after a forced landing. They departed from KMYF at 0730, runway 28R.

Takeoff and climb out were normal. Engine gauges were green. They configured for climb at 1500 MSL, setting manifold pressure to 25" and RPM to 2500. Climbing through 3000 MSL north of Torrey Pines, they noticed the oil pressure gauge was indicating no pressure. They decided to level off and terminate our flight at KCRQ. They leveled off and configured the aircraft for cruise by setting manifold pressure to 23" and RPM to 2300. Their altitude was 3200 MSL. The aircraft operated normally. They then communicated their situation and intentions to ATC.

A few minutes later, in the vicinity of Del Mar, the propeller decreased pitch to max RPM. This confirmed there was a fault in the oil system. To prevent the engine from overspeeding, they gradually reduced throttle. RPM was roughly 2700. In an attempt to maintain airspeed and keep the engine cool without losing significant altitude, they initiated a gradual descent. Smoke began flowing through the defrost vents. The smoke smelled like burnt oil. They turned off the defrosters.

Over Encinitas, at 2800 MSL, the engine failed. Simultaneously, a loud bang from the engine compartment occurred, smoke began to billow from all sides of the engine compartment, and the propeller stopped spinning. They pitched for best glide and pointed the aircraft at the shoreline, roughly 30 degrees to our left. They confirmed the best landing spot to be just offshore. We then communicated to KCRQ Tower of our emergency situation and their intention to land offshore Batiquitos Lagoon.

The aircraft was equipped with a gear override system that automatically lowers the gear in certain configurations. They wanted to land on the water with the gear up, so they engaged the gear override system. They maintained best glide until over the water where they slowed the aircraft to about 60 MPH right before touchdown. Also prior to touchdown, they turned off the magnetos and battery master switch and opened the door.

Upon touchdown, the aircraft slid/skipped over the water and came to an abrupt stop. Aircraft configuration was gear up, full flaps, no power. The aircraft floated. They exited the aircraft as briefed: right seat first, rear passenger second, left seat third and swam to shore. At this point the aircraft was relatively intact. Touchdown on the water occurred at roughly 0800.