

To the best of my recollection, these are the events of last week, May 4th -7th, regarding N5802V and Mr. Byrd.

The previous week Mr. Byrd contacted me about installing a new main battery in his aircraft. The new battery was installed Tuesday the 5th and I texted Mr. Byrd late that day that it was done. He texted back that he would pick it up mid-morning to relocate it to KAVL and asked if I would top it off.

Wednesday morning, the 6th, I fueled the aircraft. It took 56.9 gallons to top it off.

Mr. Byrd taxied up to the main hangar mid-morning and I helped him clean some bird droppings off the aircraft. He departed in the aircraft sometime after 11 am.

The weather conditions at the time were about 80 degrees with an estimated 5-8 knot surface wind from the east to southeast. Mr. Byrd utilized runway 33 which is not unusual during light south winds as the terrain, distance to trees and runway slope are more favorable than runway 15 with these conditions.

The runup sounded smooth and uneventful. I believe that flaps were set at 0 degrees on takeoff, but cannot be totally sure. I heard and watched the first part of the take off roll and the engine sounded strong and normal. Acceleration appeared normal.

I glanced at the aircraft again as it rotated about mid field which was as expected. I next saw the aircraft as it crossed the road at the end of the runway where it was about even with the tops of the trees on the side of the runway. I estimate that as 40-50 agl.

I continued to watch as he approached the trees at the end of the field past the end of the runway (about 1000' past the end of the runway) and noted that the aircraft was above the tops of the trees by my sightline. I estimate that he cleared the trees by about 50 ft.

There was nothing alarming or unusual about the aircraft's departure considering the conditions. I had experienced similar performance with my Cherokee Warrior the previous afternoon. I remember thinking at that time that there probably was a stronger south east flow above the trees as our climb flattened out after departure. The local weather has been pretty cool this spring and these were some of the first warm days.

Mr. Byrd called me soon after noon and expressed concern that the aircraft was not climbing well. I mentioned to him that it was a warm day, he was probably only a few hundred pounds under gross and he had a slight tail wind. I also asked if he had the magnetos in the "both" position. He said that it had a key type system and he was pretty sure it was in "both".

He said that he would do a run up and if OK a test flight the next day in KAVL. We spoke about judging aircraft performance using the performance charts and estimating ground roll.

Later, I texted him and asked him to do an inflight mag check if he flew it.

The next morning, Thursday the 7th, he texted me that he was going to fly it and if it wasn't performing, could he come over so I could take a look at it. I replied "Sure".

About 30 minutes later he texted that the run was good but he was not getting full rpm at full power, while static.

I texted back that he should do a run down the runway and note the rpm as some aircraft do not turn up full rpm while static.

Mr. Byrd called me about 30 minutes later, said he flew the aircraft, everything was normal and I remember him remarking that it was "climbing 1,000 fpm". That was my last contact with him.

John Fadok
Hendersonville Airport
May 12, 2015
