

Rayner Brian

From: -----
Sent: Friday, July 02, 2010 1:35 PM
To: Rayner Brian
Subject: Fw: N26EL incident

The pilot finally furnished a written statement of what he remembers. He seems to think that the engine not running was an electrical issue. He said he checked the fuel valve and it was on. There was fuel in the aircraft and the engine had run previously that day. That type engine did have a serious enough AD that required removal of the engine and it was returned to the factory in Germany for maintenance. I have given Inspector Dave Alderman information and he will contact Mr. Long.

Wes Jones
BNA FSDO

----- Forwarded by Charles W Jones/ASO/FAA on 07/02/2010 12:30 PM -----
From: Jeff Long -----
To: Charles W Jones/-----
Date: 07/02/2010 11:40 AM
Subject: N26EL incident

Mr. Jones,

This is a brief description of the incident that resulted in damage to my Schleicher ASH26e glider.

On June 18, 2010, I was at 1000' AGL when I decided to restart the engine to climb to a higher altitude for a glide to Tullahoma, TN airport. I was somewhere a little southwest of Shelbyville, TN airport. I had restarted the engine successfully about 30 minutes prior to that. The day was calm and smooth and there was little thermal activity. I set the switches to extend the propeller and it extended fully. I set the switches to start the engine and the battery warning light came on. The starter would not move. At that point, the propeller would not retract and so remained extended above the glider.

I picked a field for landing. Since I was still almost 1000 feet above ground and near the field I had picked, I decided to spend that altitude in an attempt to air start the engine. I pointed the nose down to increase airspeed and the engine did start. The engine ran for somewhere between 5 and 10 seconds and stopped. But it ran long enough that, thinking I no longer needed the field, I flew by the field. When the engine stopped I was too low to find another field in front of me and started a turn back to the field I had previously picked. Had I been able to retract the propeller, I would have had sufficient altitude to complete the turn. However, the extended prop and its support structure has the same effect as extended spoilers and my descent rate was too high. I made it back to the field but was not in a landing attitude when I impacted the ground. A ground loop resulted. The fuselage and horizontal tail were damaged beyond economic repair.

I later check to see if I had opened the fuel valve before the air start attempt. Opening the fuel valve is a checklist item and I found it in the open position. The fuel tanks were about 2/3 full.

The wings appear to have minor cosmetic damage and the engine and propeller mast have no visible damage.

The Schleicher factory has viewed my photos and is of the opinion that if the glider is to be used again, that all of it must be shipped to the factory so that they can ensure that there is no hidden damage to the wings, the engine, and the propeller mast. At a minimum, a new fuselage will have to be built and the fit of the wings matched to that fuselage.

There was no significant injury. I had some upper back pain that felt like muscle strain. I had x-rays done in Tullahoma which detected no breaks or separations. There was no property damage aside from the glider.

Regards,
Jeff Long