



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

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Eastern Region

Date: December 11, 2012
Person Interviewed: Mr. Jim Leach
NTSB Accident Number: ERA13FA082

Narrative:

Mr. Leach was the co-owner/operator of Windward Aviation at North Palm Beach County Airpark (LNA), Lantana, Florida, where the annual inspection and painting of the accident airplane was performed. Mr. Leach held Commercial Multi-engine, single engine, instrument airplane, flight instructor and Airframe and Powerplant certificates. He estimated that he had over 6,000 hours of flight experience.

Mr. Leach performed a test flight with the accident pilot at the completion of the annual inspection. Prior to takeoff the propeller rpm was matched on both engines on the ground, but after takeoff the left engine showed 100 rpm above maximum when the right engine was at maximum.

Once the rpm was matched manually by the pilot, Mr. Leach noticed that the fuel flow on the left engine was about 1.5 to 2.0 gallons per hour below that of the right engine. The fuel flow rate on the left engine was also below that prescribed in the engine maintenance guidance. (SID 97-3).

The airplane was flown for 1.2 hours, and during the flight cabin pressurization, prop synchronization, flight controls, and the autopilot were tested. About mid-flight left alternator segment light illuminated, and the amp meter/voltmeter showed a drop in voltage. About 5 minutes later, the light extinguished, and the amp meter/voltmeter showed normal voltage for the remainder of the flight.

After landing, the airplane was shutdown, and the accident pilot was told that the propeller rpm and the fuel flow needed adjustment on the left engine only. There were also some cosmetic corrections that needed to be made.

The list of discrepancies was given to Fausto Garcia for correction. He made the adjustments, boarded the airplane, started it, taxied out, and performed a complete run-up and confirmed that the propeller rpm and fuel flow were in accordance with SID 97-3.

According to Mr. Leach, Mr. Leach said the accident pilot used a checklist in the cockpit prior to takeoff, and during shutdown after the test flight. He did not know if the pilot used the checklist during preflight prior to the accident flight.

After the corrections were made and prior to delivery of the airplane to the pilot, the maintenance records were reviewed to confirm all the work that was done during the annual inspection.

The pilot completed the preflight inspection and the airplane was towed outside. The pilot started the airplane and then shutdown and reported that neither alternator was charging. Mr. Leach boarded the airplane, the right engine was started, and the alternator light extinguished, and the amp meter/voltmeter showed it was charging. The left engine was started, the alternator segment was illuminated, and no charge showed on the amp/voltmeter. The light then alternately extinguished and illuminated for about 5 minutes before the light extinguished for another 5 minutes and Mr. Leach deplaned. The pilot said he was going to fly to Okeechobee, Florida, complete a few landings, and then continue to Miami if the light did not illuminate again.

The pilot performed a ground run of the airplane for several minutes and then taxied to the approach end of Runway 3. "We saw him take the runway, broke ground about halfway down the runway and climbed at the 'normal' gradient. The airplane suddenly yawed left for a second or two, then the pitch attitude of the airplane continued up, up, up." Mr. Leach demonstrated with his hand a nearly vertical pitch attitude, before he demonstrated and described how the airplane rolled left and then descended vertically, nose-down, until it disappeared from view.

Mr. Leach said it was impossible to discern any change in engine noise because of the ambient airplane noise that surrounded him. He added, "The airplane pitched up to near vertical, and then rolled over into a hammerhead, and then descended vertically nose down behind the trees."

Mr. Leach said the pilot seemed well organized, had a checklist at hand, and seemed comfortable with the airplane.