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Western Pacific Region

Date: August 14, 2023
Subject: WPR23LA307 / Record of Conversation
Contact: Robert Ewald, Pilot

In a telephone conversation with the pilot, he stated that he had visitors over and was going to give a ride to them. He placed the first passenger in the front seat of the airplane and described her as weighing about 100 pounds. He said that he had about 30 gallons of fuel on board. He reported that "the engine started right up and ran fine." He performed a run up check. He increased the engine RPM's to about 1800 and saw an RPM drop of about 75 to 100 RPM on the magneto check, which he described as normal for that airplane. He completed his full run up and re-stated that it sounded fine.

He reported that the wind was south, south-east about 4 knots. And that it was not a factor. The altitude of the airport was about 6,000 ft mean sea level (msl), and the temp was about 60°F. He determined that the density altitude was not bad, and that the airplane was within center of gravity.

He described the takeoff climb in the airplane as a slow climb, and that the airport sat on a plateau, which was commonly referred to as "the west bench." It had about a 45° downward slope that continued downhill for about 100 ft. He reported that after he crossed over the plateau the airplane did not hold altitude or airspeed, but the engine was still running. He reported that he did not hear a big loss of engine RPM, but that he flew with noise cancelling headphones. He reported that he did not look inside at the engine tachometer as he was focused on selecting a landing area. He checked that his throttle and mixture were full forward, and that the ignition switch was in BOTH. The airplane continued to descend below the level of the plateau. He decided to stall the airplane into the trees and the airplane settled down into the

trees. Neither were injured. He estimated the entry speed was about 45 knots. He observed a small fuel leak from the right-hand side.

He suspected that he could have had a mechanical malfunction from the fuel delivery system or electrical system. He reported his weight at 185 pounds.