



NTSB RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Lynn Spencer
Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region, Office of Aviation Safety (AS-ERA)
National Transportation Safety Board

Date: 9/18/2020
Person Interviewed: Richard Bartlett, Flight Instructor
Accident Number: ERA20LA320

The following is a summary of a conversation that occurred with the above-named individual:

- The airplane owner is a private pilot and A&P mechanic, and he flew out there with him to purchase and fly home in the airplane. They had a pre-buy inspection done on the airplane about a week earlier.
- The airplane was sold by someone who was flew less than 2 hours in the last year.
- He and the owner took the airplane to the gas pumps and it took 20 gallons in each tank (it holds 40 gallons). "It was bone dry, but it did start and taxi to the pumps." After filling the tanks, the fuel selector indicated 18 gallons per side.
- They checked for water, pulled away from the fuel tanks, and performed an engine runup. One magneto drop was 150 rpm, the carb heat worked; brakes held; controls were good.
- They took off on left tank and flew 15 minutes and switched to the right tank and flew for another 1.5 hours.
- They had just commented about how well it ran and then the engine started to sputter.
- He stated that they were 2,300 ft AGL and he did not have time to grab the checklist; however, he tried to change the magnetos and mixture, and switched fuel tanks several times. When he pumped the primer, he could get it to run about 5 seconds and then the engine would quit. The prop was windmilling
- He stated that "it definitely seemed to be fuel-related because it did not seem to be the mags and when I pumped the throttle, I would get a few more seconds."
- He stated that he lost over 500 feet of altitude trying to get the engine re-started, and then his options for field was more limited.
- He decided to perform a forced landing in a field that looked flat but as they got close he could see telephone poles. He added flaps to miss the wires then landed in the field and started decelerating. About 200 feet later there was a hill and they started to accelerate down the hill and got slightly airborne (5-6 inches). They came up to a road with a 5-ft



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berm on the other side, and he pulled back to try to get over the berm, but the gear caught the top of the berm about halfway up the berm. The nose then hit the ground and they slid 20-25 feet. The airplane never flipped over.

- He noted that the tail number painted on the airplane does not match the registration.



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Dates: 9/18/2020 and 9/23/2020

Person Interviewed: Raymond Fagnano III, Owner and Pilot

Accident Number: ERA20LA320

The following is a summary of a conversation that occurred with the above-named individual:

9/18/2020:

- The landing gear was ripped out of the frame, the engine needs replacement, and the struts where they meet fuselage are bent.
- He stated that they started to have a fuel issue during the flight; perhaps a fuel line was plugged?
- He stated that Mr. Bartlett tried to switch tanks several times, but the engine would not run.
- He said that he lived 4 hours away and would return next weekend to pick up that airplane, and that they had departed from KVVV, which is where they filled the fuel tanks.

9/23/2020:

- Mr. Fagnano stated there is a secured facility that he can use to store the airplane once he recovers it from the field and takes it to 1N7 in Blairstown, NJ.
- I asked him about the position of the left wing vented fuel cap. He stated that after the airplane came to rest in the field with the nose down, fuel was pouring out of the vent cap on the left wing so they twisted the gas cap so that the vent faced the rear of the wing, which was upward.
- He explained that both vented fuel caps were pointed forward when they took off and that he called someone to confirm that that was the correct position for them because it looked strange.



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Date: 9/18/2020
Person Interviewed: Ralph “Bud” Lesch, Farmer
Accident Number: ERA20LA320

The following is a summary of a conversation that occurred with the above-named individual:

- Mr. Lesch stated that he recovered about 8 gallons from the left wing before running out of containers.
- He stated that there was no debris or water in the fuel.
- I requested that he take no more fuel until the airplane had been inspected, and that I would advise him when he could take the rest of the fuel. He understood and agreed and provided a good street address for where the wreckage is located.