



Seven years in the live of a TSB investigator Part 3

A question that was often asked to me as an investigator was: “how can you stand looking at all those dead bodies that are torn to bits. The answer is easy; “dead bodies never talk back; it is the next-of-kin that can be hard to deal with.” The worse was answering the questions of small children like “how or why

did my Daddy die?” The other was what we called; “the widow syndrome.” This syndrome originates in the thought that they are somehow responsible for the fatality and in some cases they will spend vast amounts of money finding an “expert” who will “prove,” to her at least, that her husband was in no way to blame for what happened. At the least they will continuously call you to ask if you had considered this or that possibility. For example: “Did you consider that he might have been blinded by lightning in the rainstorm he was trying to land in? He had pushed his luck and descended below minimums to crash short of the runway.

#6 The Rogue Versus the Moose.

A rogue is a person who feels that their superior talents somehow preclude them from following all the rules that we commoners do. They have become very complacent (Issue June 2016) and are a danger to themselves and others. They have lost awareness of the dangers and may take ever increasing risks until an accident occurs or they become aware of the danger of not following the rules. You be the judge.

The accident aircraft was a Cessna TU206 on amphibious floats owned by a doctor. It had a useful load of about 1000 lbs. He and four buddies were going on a fishing trip in Northern BC. Their body weight was determined to be 950 lbs. leaving 50 lbs. for fuel and luggage. The aircraft was equipped with long range fuel tanks holding 552 lbs of fuel.

One of the float compartments had been converted into a fuel tank that could hold a further 330 lbs of fuel. This was an illegal mod but rogues don’t need to follow rules but I’d sure like to talk to the person who did the mod.

The doctor’s live-in girlfriend (according to his sister) videotaped the loading of the aircraft for the trip in which the contents of a pick up truck box were loaded into every available inch of space. The exact take off weight could not be determined but it is Safe to say that it was grossly overweight. The video camera was mounted in the windshield V struts

pointing straight ahead. He flew at very low level perhaps due to the excess weight and buzzed a boat on the way. They saw an eagle and chased it with the aircraft trying to videotape it.

Video showed them flying approximately 50 ft. over persons in a canoe as he flew low level up the river to a cabin on a lake.

Video tape shows them having a good time and getting very intoxicated.

The next morning they departed to fly to a small town to get supplies as discussed the night before. On the way they spotted a moose swimming in the river. The pilot entered a steep descending left turn, likely to film the moose. The stall warning beeped as he reversed to the right followed by an increase in power as the trees on the river bank filled the video screen.

There is the sound of the tree tops hitting the aircraft as it rolled to crash inverted 800 ft from the initial tree strike.

The right strut was found 290 ft. from the initial impact.

A severe post crash fire including some from the float fuel tank consumed the aircraft. The video was found on the 3rd day after we discovered videotapes at the cabin but no camera. It had flown through the windshield and was buried under 8 inches of dirt that protected it from the fire.



The pilot had about 2,800 hrs flying time and was experienced in aerobatics but had not performed any aerobatic flights for a number of years.

Toxicology tests revealed that he had a BAC of .03 which was likely the result of heavy drinking the night before. He was likely hung-over which would help explain the codeine and valium along with caffeine and capoten in his bloodstream. Capoten is used to lower blood pressure and carries the warning that it may cause drowsiness and dizziness.

The live-in girlfriend, met for the interview, dressed in all black and accompanied by a lawyer. She insisted that the pilot would never overload the aircraft and was a very cautious flyer. When we asked her questions, the lawyer would intervene saying she was too distraught to answer. Some of the video tapes had shown a very different personality than the one being interviewed. The tapes were released to his sister according to the will.

The moral is that if you know of a rogue, speak up as there is a high likelihood that the person will take increasing risks until an incident occurs unless stopped beforehand. You may save that person's and others lives.

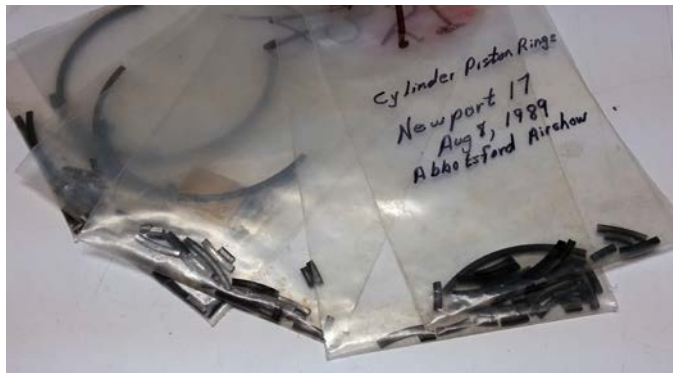
7 Nieuport 17 crashes without the Red Baron's help

The World War 1 fighter was making a steep climbing right turn when the LeRhone 9JB rotary engine lost power. The aircraft stalled and crashed still in the right turn. The pilot was seriously hurt and I had a lot of learning to do. I was shocked to see that the pilot had sat on a wicker chair with only a broad 4 inch lap belt to hold him in. Inspection of the primary controls, revealed full continuity



prior to impact. I now had to determine why the WW1 aircraft engine had lost power and that involved an engine teardown. A teardown on an engine that had the crankshaft attached to the airframe and the cylinders rotated with the propeller. It had one pushrod per cylinder and ate castor oil like a two stroke but was a four stroke with a single pushrod per cylinder going to a rocker arm between the intake and exhaust valves so there could be no

valve overlap here. With a compression ratio of 4.68 to 1 it should be easy to hand prop. The amazing thing is that it produced 130 hp at 1350 rpm and weighed only 268 lbs. Only 13 years earlier the Wright brothers with the help of Charles Taylor, had



managed to crawl into the air with a 180 lb. engine that produced only 12 hp. Removal of the cylinders revealed that each piston had only a single compression ring and every one of them was broken into as many as 26 pieces. That would not be good for compression or power but would not explain a sudden power loss. Did one or more of the single sparkplugs per cylinder get oiled up? All the plugs looked black sooty and oily so it was hard to tell. All the plugs tested ok but it would only take a momentary loss of power for the aircraft to stall at the low speed and high drag configuration that it was in. Or was it a sudden interruption on the gravity fuel flow? Or was it simply pilot error exceeding the aircraft's ability with a sick engine and the desire to put on a good show.

While I suspect the latter, when one is unable to prove a suspicion then it does not enter a report.

The good news is you can view this same aircraft at the Canadian Aviation & Space Museum in Ottawa.

The moral is to always be sure beyond a reasonable doubt before committing yourself to doing it. Aviation doesn't always give you a second chance.

