



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Preliminary Report

Location:	Conway, SC	Accident Number:	CEN22FA419
Date & Time:	September 14, 2022, 12:22 Local	Registration:	N62FC
Aircraft:	Piper PA-28R-201	Injuries:	2 Fatal
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

On September 14, 2022, about 1222 eastern daylight time, a Piper PA-28R-201 airplane, N62FC, was destroyed when it was involved in an accident near Conway, South Carolina. The pilot and passenger were fatally injured. The airplane was operated as a Title 14 *Code of Federal Regulations* Part 91 personal flight.

The flight departed Myrtle Beach International Airport (MYR), Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, about 1205, and was en route to Columbus County Municipal Airport (CPC), Whiteville, North Carolina. Shortly after departure from MYR, the pilot reported to air traffic control (ATC) that he was having problems with the compass which resulted in difficulty maintaining assigned headings from ATC. He stated that he wanted to return to the airport and was not declaring an emergency. About 30 seconds later, the pilot reported a loss of engine power. He informed ATC that he was unable to make it back to MYR and had identified an off-field landing area.

Surveillance video captured the airplane as it flew low near trees but did not capture the accident sequence due to a power surge when the airplane impacted a powerline. Witnesses nearby reported seeing the airplane and stated that they heard no engine sound.

The airplane first impacted an estimated 40 ft tall pine tree and then a powerline and came to rest against a berm along a gravel roadway. The right wing and vertical stabilizer separated during the impact with the pine tree and powerline respectively. A post-crash fire ensued which consumed much of the wreckage and back burned to the tree from the initial impact.

A postaccident examination of the engine revealed that the Nos. 2, 3, and 4 connecting rods separated. The left engine crankcase half was fractured inboard of the No.4 cylinder mounting pad. The Nos.3 and 4 connecting rods were separated from their respective crankshaft rod journals and the damaged rod ends were visible through the crankcase fracture. During disassembly of the engine, a vacuum pump cover (item No. 13 in Figure 1 below from the Lycoming Parts Catalog) was removed from the vacuum pump drive pad and no gasket (item No. 11), or remnants of a gasket, were found. Other engine components were removed, and all had remnants of a gasket despite the thermal damage.

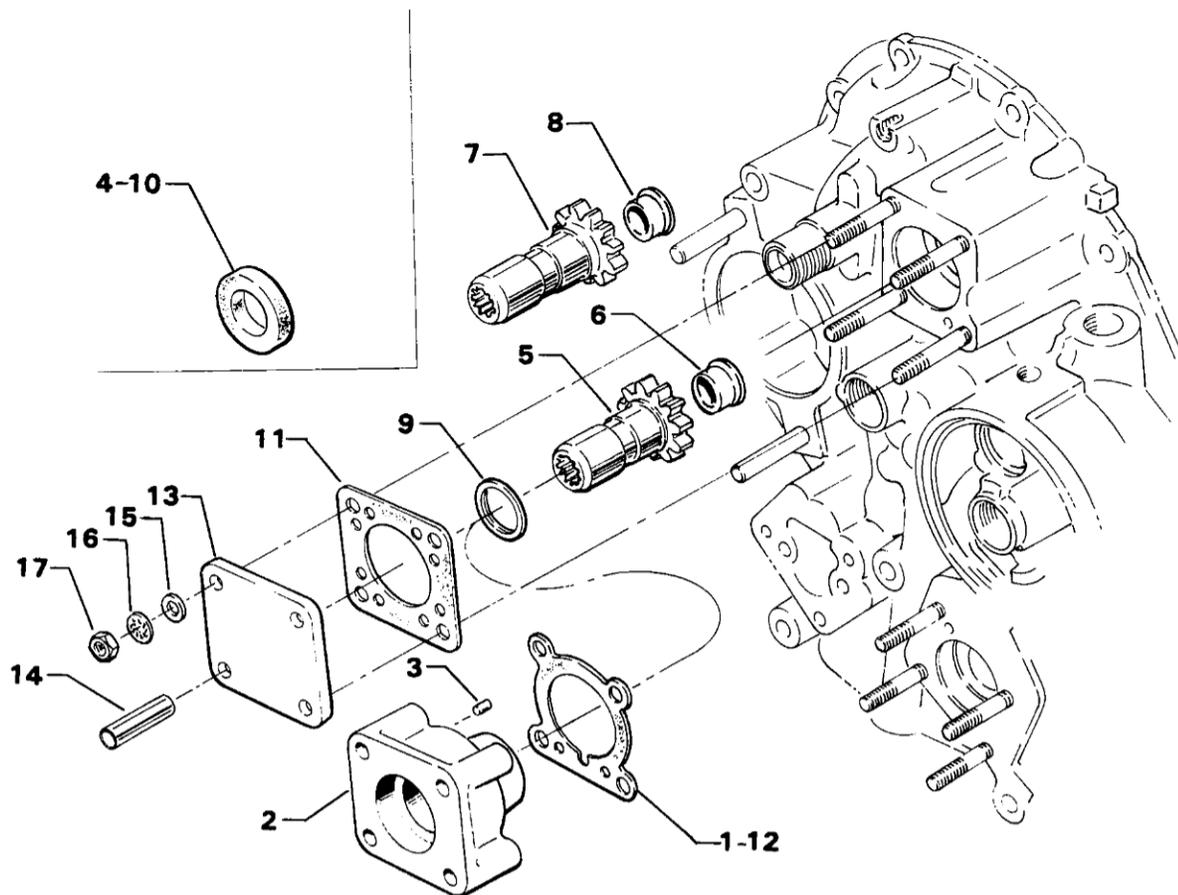


Figure 1: Excerpt from Lycoming Parts Catalog, View of Engine Accessory Case

A review of maintenance records found within the accident debris field revealed that the airplane had just undergone an avionics upgrade at a maintenance facility in Myrtle Beach. According to the director of maintenance, the airplane had been at the facility for about 6 to 7 weeks before the accident flight, which was the first flight following the upgrades. The work performed included removal of the vacuum system, installation of two Garmin G5 instruments, and installation of a Garmin GFC-500 autopilot system. The length of time at the facility was due to supply chain issues and not any underlying maintenance concerns. He also stated that the only work conducted on the engine was the removal of the vacuum pump and installation of a blanking plate on the vacuum pump drive pad. No record of the blanking plate installation was found in the logbook entry, nor was there a mention of an engine runup following completion of the work.

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Piper	Registration:	N62FC
Model/Series:	PA-28R-201	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Amateur Built:			
Operator:	On file	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None
Operator Designator Code:			

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	VMC	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	KMYR, 25 ft msl	Observation Time:	11:56 Local
Distance from Accident Site:	8 Nautical Miles	Temperature/Dew Point:	26 °C / 16 °C
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:	7 knots / , 20°
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility:	10 miles
Altimeter Setting:	30.05 inches Hg	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Departure Point:	Myrtle Beach, SC (MYR)	Destination:	Whiteville, NC (CPC)

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Fatal	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Passenger Injuries:	1 Fatal	Aircraft Fire:	On-ground
Ground Injuries:		Aircraft Explosion:	Unknown
Total Injuries:	2 Fatal	Latitude, Longitude:	33.812086, -78.967363

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Williams, David
Additional Participating Persons:	Charles Lewis; FAA; Columbia, SC Mike Childers; Lycoming Engines; Williamsport, PA Damien Galbraith; Piper Aircraft; Vero Beach, FL
Note:	