

Ditching in an EZ

Charlie Mottier (LA) - Following Sun n Fun 94, nineteen canard type airplanes flew to Great Harbor Cay in the Berry Islands (67 nautical miles south of Freeport, Grand Bahamas) for some well deserved R & R.

On the flight home our Long-EZ experienced a loss in engine power about fifteen minutes into the flight and we, subsequently, ditched the airplane in Big Sturup Bay of the Berry Island. When the problem developed we immediately advised our flying partner and then changed frequencies to call in a Mayday, which was acknowledged by Customs at the airport. We advised that we were attempting to return to the airstrip and requested landing priority. On that frequency all inbound and departing aircraft were advised of the emergency.

When it became apparent that we would not make the field, the decision was made to ditch rather than put the airplane in the trees on the adjacent island. I felt there would be less chance of fire in a water landing.

Our landing speed into the wind, and with calm seas was about as low as possible to keep the sink rate to a minimum. The main gear hit first and pitched the plane forward. The canard was sliced off cleanly at the fuselage on both sides. The plane dove under water and the canopy was lifted right out of its frame.

We came to rest dead in the water and perfectly level. With the canopy gone, I simply stood up and turned to check up on my wife who was in the back seat. Boats, wanting to help, arrived within three minutes. After sending Phyllis to the local dispensary, we towed the plane to shore.

I suffered no injuries other than some cuts and bruises and required no medical attention. Phyl suffered some sore ribs on her left side and

some minor cuts. On complete examination, in Ft. Lauderdale's Browder Memorial Hospital, she was pronounced fit and was released.

There are at least two important points for EZ drivers to be learned from this experience.

1. The water landing is survivable although it is hard on the airplane. My plane floated, it was heavily loaded, and it floated entirely level. We walked on the wings, as did others, and it was very stable. In attempting to stretch the glide to reach the airport, I did not extend the nose gear. If I had to do it over again I would put the nose gear down. That might help soften the forward pitch when the main gear digs into the water.

2. Most of our problems have developed from dealing with our own FAA.

They advised immediately and strongly that we were in violation of the law by being in Bahama air space without receiving prior written approval from the Bahama government. That restriction is shown on the back of your pink Experimental Airworthiness Certificate. It is Item D and, among other things, restricts Experimental Aircraft from flying over any foreign country without the special permission of that country. That means, "in writing and in advance".

In summary, we do not know what happened to our factory new 250 hour Lycoming O-320 150 hp engine. The plane took all of the licks and we elected to total it. The occupants suffered almost none at all. Not a pretty story, but we think one with a happy ending.

We want to thank our canard friends who agonized with us, as we splashed down, and appreciate their continued support through phone calls and cards.

Engine for Sale

Lycoming O-235 C2C. About 1900 hrs - not all time was logged.

(808) 572-8864.

B. Hughes

158 Haulani Street
Pukalani, HI 96768

For Sale

11 Morrow 618 LORAN - Complete - \$600

Contact:

Bruce Tiff

503-942-7068

Long-EZ For Sale

Long-EZ, 160 hours total time. White pearl urethane paint, engine - O-235-L2C 160 SMOH, Ellison, 125 hp pistons, chrome jugs, balanced, Mode C X-ponder, Nav 30 LORAN, Becker comm 720 channel, full panel. \$25,000

Call: Ken Humphreys

(816) 453-2144

Kansas City, MO

Editor note: I've seen this one; it is really sharp!

Waterproof Your Canopy Cover

Gene Zabler (WI) - After a couple years my canopy cover lost its waterproof ability. I stuffed the nylon cover in a gallon jug filled with Thompson's Water Seal. I soaked it overnight and then hung it up to dry. It has a waxy feel but doesn't seem to bother anything and is now waterproof.

