NEWS & VIEWS

OSPREY 2 TURNS OVER DURING WATER TESTING

"Dear Ken & Lynn,

I performed the "step trim" modification on my Osprey that George wrote about in the newsletter. It's true that as little as 1/16" is noticeable in this area and it did help stop the porpoise tendency.

Unfortunately, as I continued water practice I learned something the hard way. While well up on the step, at about 55 or 50, the aircraft began a yaw to the left. The yaw was gradual and noticeable, but I have yet to determine the cause. Possibly weathervaning or following a swell. (Wind was left quartering tail at 15 knots,sea was about 5-6" and didn't feel rough) After receiving the yaw, I re-acted in what I now think must have been the wrong way. I eased in a little right rudder (probably not enough) and a little right aileron (should have been left). What happened in the next 1½ seconds I will be re-hashing for quite awhile, and I just presume happened in this order. I believe the right spray rail caught a swell which started the right wing into the water. The wing immediately caught and flipped the aircraft on its back. In-tact were the entire tail assembly, aft fuselage, motor & mount, and left wing. Gone was the nose section and right wing, with a surface crack in the main spar; right side.

Talks with George indicate he has done extensive water experimentation with never a hint of this type of problem. But I am writing this as an in-field experience in hopes of keeping another newcomer out of trouble. The lesson I learned is: under certain conditions it is possible to catch a wing and flip. The worst situation is sliding sideways and letting the forward wing go down. The Osprey, is, in fact, an extremely strong aircraft,and exceptionally maneuverable.

As a final note to those approaching water testing, be prepared for the worst. I certainly didn't expect to find myself strapped in, upside down, under murky cold water. It is quite a startling experience. The Navy prepares it's pilots for this by putting them in the situation in a pool. Best we can do is practice on land, know the release systems (belt & canopy) by heart,with your eyes closed, and holding your breath. Then assume you are conscious at the time, which points to the importance of not only a chase boat, but also their familiarity with your canopy, belt, and perhaps even an aqua lung.

Mike Brundage
Rt. 8 Box 673
Ft. Worth, TX 76108 (817-246-0075)

COMMENTS FROM GEORGE ON ABOVE "ACCIDENT"

It is always tragic news to me when I learn of a beautiful homebuilt lost in an accident. The good news in this case is that Mike was not injured.

I have since talked to Mike twice by phone. We have compared notes on the technique in handling the Osprey on water. Unfortunately the accident happened so fast it is very difficult to pin down exactly what happened.

A few thoughts for its worth!

A fifteen knot wind usually produces about 8 to 10 in caps and on some lakes will produce no caps but rollers some 10 to 20 ft. apart. Take off into a roller wave quartering (hitting from an angle)could produce a skipping motion that would turn the aircraft sideways to its path. Most race boats try to slow down when approaching a quartering wave as it can flip a boat very easily. In Mike's case he was indicating about 55 knots. Add the 15 knot quartering tail wind and your surface speed is getting up there. It's always easy to quarterback the game when its over but perhaps we can all learn from Mike's accident.

1. Don't make a takeoff down wind if you have other options.
2. Be sure to let your Osprey weathercock at rest so you know the exact wind direction prior to takeoff.
3. When the water has rollers try to taxi to a sheltered area where its reduced to a chop. If it looks marginal set it out!

OSPREY 2 NEWSLETTER
35079 Road J
Oconomowoc, WI 53066

BULK RATE
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 27
OCONOMOWOC, WI 53066