

"Dear Ken and Lynn,

Since the subject of the fuel system on our Ospreys has come up again, I thought I'd relate my experience again on my very first flight. I originally installed an automotive Hastings pump in series with the engine driven pump, exactly as shown in the plans and in all my testing used the electric pump to get started and for slow taxiing, etc. When I took off for the first time, as it turned out, with the electric pump off, the engine driven pump would not pull enough gas thru the electric pump to run the engine and it ran intermittently. As a result my first flight almost ended up in disaster but I was able to make a 180 and get back to the airport and land. Now, I have 2 T's in the plumbing so each pump works as a checkvalve and the engine will run on either one or both pumps. I have since changed to a Bendix electric pump and have had no trouble at all with the new plumbing: (See drawings)

After about a year of flying, I was unable to find a suitable ramp anywhere to put my Osprey in the water, so I brought it down on a trailer with the wings off to our shipyard on the Mississippi River, put it all back together and set it in the water with slings and our crane. The first time I was taxiing and noticed I was taking on a lot of water. I had very carelessly failed to put a good gasket under the inspection plate on the side under the fin. As George suggests, I had a boat standing by, this one a small towboat with a crane, so I took the cowling off and lifted my Osprey by attaching a chain to the engine mount and the prop hub and set it on our work barge. About a week later, in the water again trying to get the feel of what it's like! I have never flown a seaplane before and taxied slow and fast for about a half hour and decided to take off and had a wild, wild ride and never did get off. As I neared flying speed, we started to porpoise very badly so I quit trying and put my plane back on the barge again because I thought I might not have had the 3/16 buildup on the step. I checked this and found it to be OK so the next week end, back in the water the third time. I decided it wasn't the airplane, but me. So this time, I held the stick all the way back and poured on the power and when we got up on the step eased forward just a little and in no time lifted off like I'd been at it for years.

The next thing was landing in the river. So several weeks ago, when the river was nice and smooth, I figured I'd give it a try. I reread George's instructions and apparently just couldn't bring myself to ease forward on the stick when I touched the water. As a re-

sult we skipped and bounced. The third time I hit, the landing gear came down, as it turned out, the axle on the walking beam broke and we stopped. So back again on the barge for repairs. In the meantime the river is very high and full of logs so we'll wait until things calm down before trying again.

I am not a high time pilot and have never flown on the water, although I have had many rides in various seaplanes, all the way from PBYS and PBMs to Cessnas on floats. It is utterly different, as I see it, because the airplane is not on a solid base as it is on a hard runway and as a result has to be flown all the time whether going fast or slow on the water. It's not easy to practice mostly because my Osprey is very hard to handle on the water. With just me in it, it seems to draw a lot of water and even with the water rudder down is hard to make turns - I haven't had two people in it - yet - and wonder how deep it will float with the added weight. It does get right up, however, when it is given power. I'm certainly not the one to give advice, but with a small amount of water experience, I do feel I can advise two things. First - be very, very cautious. Second - do just exactly what George says in the directions.

My first prop was a 3 bladed one 68" in diameter with 58" of pitch. I couldn't get more than 2300 RPM full ahead so I got Mr. Peery at Brookshire, Texas to make me a two bladed one, 68" in diameter with 52" of pitch. It is perfect.

Finally, Oshkosh was, as usual the greatest and we enjoyed seeing not only the four beautiful Ospreys but the friends we have made over the past years with our airplanes. The two highlights were the get together with all the builders and George's forum. They have awards for the categories of airplanes so I think George should be given an award for by far the best forum. I can't help but reflect on one thing he said to the effect that water loads on an airplane in the water are far greater than on land. This airplane is some tough bird and mine has proved it with my wild rides and slamming and banging on the Mississippi River.

Very best regards and best wishes for the New Year.

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