

## BRIEF HISTORY OF TITAN T-51 LADY ELAINE N2491U

2003-2007

Aircraft is built by 3 men with the Rotax engine then being used for the kit and completed in 2007. It is then flown by Mr Ver Steeg, the owner and one of the builders, as Spare Parts for about 104 hrs until 2016.

November 2016

The builder sells the aircraft at the behest of his family, who feel he has become too old to safely pilot it. Mr Gerry Barton buys it and delivers it to Titan Aircraft with the agreement that an LS3 conversion will be performed over a period of 4 months

July 2018 (19 months later)

AC is purported to be finished and ready to begin its mandatory 5 flight hours (after engine change) to be flown off in preparation for delivery. James Oddie flies to Ashtabula, observes AC to perform well on its maiden flight, and purchases it from Gerry Barton. However, it is then found that the engine begins to misfire after about 15 minutes of flight time, so it is not ready for delivery.

October 2018

AC is started inside the hangar on full throttle with fine pitch prop, leading to destruction of the prop and damage to the outer section of the right wing when it collides with another AC in the hangar. (The throttle linkage was not connected, and Titan sets up its throttle springs to go to wide open if the linkage fails.) James is told the AC will be repaired in a month.

July 2019 (9 months later)

Wing repair completed, but engine still has misfire. Titan unable to determine cause.

September 2019

Stories vary re what happened with the original engine, but a new engine has been installed, as well as an oil cooler, which factory test pilot Bill Koleno has decided is a good idea in planes to be flown in warm climates.

3/15/20 (6 months after completion)

Bill arrives in California with the plane.

3/16/20

Bill flies w my commercial / test pilot Ethan half an hour or so then has to land because the prop control is hunting for rpm. Taking prop control off reveals oil that has obvious metal dust in it, which explains why it was sticking / hunting. Bill says I should ship it to him and he'll repair it and get it back to me ASAP. Shipped to him, arriving 3/28/20.

March to September 2020

Bill communicates with James multiple times regarding the work being carried out on it.

9/28/20

After 6 months, James tires of Bill's failure to repair the gearbox and demands he take it to Titan. Upon arrival there John Williams says the bell housing had been removed but the gearbox had not been opened. So nothing at all had been done in those 6 months and everything Bill had said was a lie.

11/1/20

Gearbox has been reinstalled and several oil changes done to clear fines. Governor fails again on climb out of first flight with Ethan at the controls. He lands immediately.

Subsequently James disassembles the gearbox and finds damaged teeth on gears and that the plastic cage of the bearing replaced by Titan has disintegrated and the unconstrained rollers have destroyed the shaft and damaged the surrounding case. The inside of the case contains a large amount of metal fines which appear to be in excess of what could have come from this failed bearing.

December 2020

New 2.2 ratio PSRU with assurances that it has not been touched mechanically by anyone at Titan and is just as it left the AutoFlight factory in New Zealand is ordered and installed.

January 2021

Gearbox run at ca 1000 rpm for total of 58 min w 6 oil changes being done during that time to clear any fines from manufacturing, then governor, which had been fully cleaned, reinstalled. Governor found to work fine.

2/22/21

Elliot Seguin flies her for 1h35m without incident.

3/30/21

Elliot flies for what was to be the last of his 5 hours before James could fly with him and the right main gear collapsed upon landing, damaging the right wingtip and left main gear leg.

Subsequently a new fiberglass wingtip was ordered from Titan and installed and painted. The minimal sheet metal at wingtip and underside of fuselage was repaired and the left gear leg welded. The superceded gear hydraulic cylinders and the bent mounts were removed. AC remains in James' hangar'

August 2022

Tail and spinner were resprayed red to match the Tuskegee Airmen colors and AC moved to the Tomorrow's Aeronautical Museum as part of the display there. During its stay there she is autographed by Otis Cowley Jr, one of the original Tuskegee Airmen, and the actor Laurence Fishburn, who played in the film *Red Tails*.

January 2024

Museum comes under new management who wants the floorspace for an enlarged exhibit for the Tuskegee Airmen and asks James to remove the AC. It is moved to the adjacent EAA hangar.

