

Mark Ward
ASI
ANC

Date: January 26, 2023
Subject: ANC23LA009 Pilot Interview
Contact: Benjamin (Ben) Sand - Pilot/Owner

Ben broke his back in the accident and was doing better.

Earlier in the year, he had the propeller sent out to be overhauled. He had just flown the airplane 3 days prior. With the overhauled propeller, the airplane felt like a rocket ship. He noted that he took off at 10:22 and at 10:23 he was already at 1000 feet. He was very excited about the performance increase. He said, he had at least an additional 100 rpm during the static rpm check. He had flown the airplane three times since the new propeller was installed. He said the airplane had sat for an extended amount of time waiting for the propeller to get overhauled. The airplane had 3-4 hours on the new propeller. On the day of the accident, it was a beautiful morning. It was the start of Christmas break, and they (the pilot and his son) were excited to go fly. He conducted the preflight with his son, showing him what to look for. The ATIS was reporting the wind coming from 170 but the tower gave him runway 21 and not runway 17. He found that odd. Runway 21 points inland towards a mountain. He usually departs toward the coast, as there is always a breeze that is coming off the ocean. All his prior flights were on Runway 3 and always had great performance. Run up was normal. The only thing he noted was an odd sound as he was taking the runway, sounded like a very small backfire maybe. Other than that, everything else on the run up was normal. Taxied to Bravo which is close to the beginning of the runway. Takeoff was normal up to about 100 to 200 feet, but then the airplane just stopped climbing. No change in engine noise, nothing seemed different, the airplane just would not climb. He looked over his gauges and everything looked normal. Oil pressure/temp looked good, His VSI was moving between 0 and 100 and maybe

below zero. Towards the end of the runway the right wing stalled, he released back pressure on the yoke to get out of the stall. He believes the airplane may have entered into a stall spin. The airplane crashed straight ahead into a fence at the end of the airport property and came to a stop on a service road.

He remembers doing a mag check and it was good but does not remember if he did a static RPM check.

He said it felt like he had a tail wind when the airplane would not climb. He has had several other pilots reach out to him to discuss their concerns with departure from runway 21. They all have encountered downdrafts at the end of the runway that came from the mountain and valley. He gave me a name of one of the pilots that had departed 20 mins before his flight and encountered heavy downdrafts and poor performance on departure. That the other pilot was lucky he had a high-performance airplane with over 300 horse and had to turn towards the ocean to gain altitude. His name is Caden, and I called him after this conversation.

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Date: January 26, 2023

Subject: ANC23LA009 Pilot that took off 20 mins before accident flight

Contact: Caden Donner - Pilot at Air Ventures

Caden is a commercial pilot for Air Ventures. He took off 20 mins before the accident airplane on the same runway.

He was flying a GA8 Airvan with 325hp. He works for a commercial operation out of Lihue Airport. On a normal departure from Lihue airport, he said his airplane is always at least 800 feet at the end of the runway. On the flight that was 20 mins before our accident flight he also departed from runway 21. He noticed, he was only at 300 feet at the end of the runway and had to turn towards the ocean to climb. He said that there is a masked downdraft coming from the mountain that the airport wind sensors do not detect.

Because of this accident, and what he and other pilots have experienced that day, the company he works for will not use runway 21 anymore. It is now their company policy to use runway 17 over 21.

He has over 250 hours of flight in the similar airplane as the accident airplane and believes with its limited power of 115 hp it would have been very difficult to have taken off from runway 21 that day.