

7238 Accident Investigation

July 1 to July 3, 2017

On July 1, 2017 at 21:05 I received a phone call from John Keith (MDW Region RMD) that the aircraft based in Farmington, MO (N238BK) had an emergency landing in Perry County Missouri. I was asked to respond to the base and quarantine fuel samples and aircraft records and await further instructions.

At 21:54, I was assigned as Interim Scene Manager and given location of the scene by John Keith. I arrived at the scene approximately 00:30 on July 2nd and found Perry County Sheriff Department securing same. I walked out to scene with the Deputy and procured pictures of scene as required. Also removed ELT from bracket and cycled to off position. Pictures were sent to John Keith as per his request. I remained on scene throughout the night.

Upon daylight, I acquired further pictures during daylight hours and sent to requested team members. FAA Inspector Harvinder Singh Jubbi arrived at the scene on 07/02 approximately 09:30 and proceeded to the aircraft for further investigation per protocol. He documented and took pictures at the scene. Mr. Jubbi then proceeded to climb into the overturned aircraft in the cockpit area and took further pictures of switches, circuit breaker, and gauges. While inside the aircraft, I overheard him make a phone call to Mr. Greg Houska inquiring about what would cause a dual engine flameout on a BK117. He then proceeded to flip open the guards for both fuel shutoff valves. I witnessed that both of these guards were safetied with breakaway wire as required. He actuated both switches to verify operation of same. No other switches were disturbed at this time.

While Mr. Jubbi was in the cockpit, he retrieved the Rotorcraft Flight Manual, airworthiness certificate and registration, and company manuals (GOM, Ops Specs, etc.) and took these with him. I was unaware of chain of custody procedures at this time. Mr. Jubbi asked if I could assist with checking the fuel filter on the #2 engine. I contacted Mark Schuster prior to performing this and was given permission to assist the FAA with whatever they required. I removed

the cowl for the #2 Engine and waited for Mr. Jubbi to arrive back at the aircraft prior to breaking any lines loose. When removing the flex line that was attached to the fuel filter bowl, it was noted by both of us that this engine filter had less than one teaspoon of fuel that came out of the filter and line. He then proceeded to where the fuel filler was located and opened the fuel filler cap. He wanted to know if we had anything long enough to determine fuel in the main tank. I informed him that these were bladder type fuel cells and that each had their own compartment. Also that it was possible to rupture the bladder tank by putting anything through the fuel filler neck. Mr. Jubbi speculated that the most likely cause of this accident was fuel starvation due to the supply tanks being depleted and the pilot's failure to turn the transfer pumps on. He asked my thoughts on this, and I let him know that this was a probable cause and a good speculation.

At approximately 11:45, Mr. Jubbi finished his on-site investigation and contacted the NTSB to inform them he was done at the scene. He informed me after he got off the phone with the NTSB that the scene was released to Air Methods for removal of the aircraft from the scene location. Approximately 12:00, Mike Stacey arrived on the scene and I debriefed with him on the events as they happened. Other team members arrived a little later and I was relieved to return to my hotel and get some rest at approximately 13:30. While driving back to my hotel, I received a phone call from Mike F of the NTSB out of Denver. He mentioned he got my name and number from Mr. Jubbi. He mentioned about Mr. Jubbi's theory for both engines flaming out and was also told that I was in agreement with same. I let him know that this was a speculation, and until further investigation was conducted, that I was not at liberty to divulge anything further. I sent him contact information for John Keith and let him know that John could give him the proper information for point of contact

Any further details regarding this investigation was gathered by the Air Methods Response team. Some of the investigation occurred during my presence at the scene.

Respectfully submitted,

David "Bart" Bartkowiak