



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Timothy N. Sorensen
Aviation Accident Investigator
Central Region

Date: October 17, 2018
Person Contacted: Jon Andel
NTSB Accident Number: CEN19FA003 – Placedo, Texas

Narrative:

Mr. Andel is the operations manager for Coastal Flying Service. He noted that the pilot had been flying with the company for about 6 years, but that he had done some ag flying before then as well. On the day of the accident, the pilot had completed two flights before the accident flight. The first flight departed about 9:30 that morning, and the second about 10:15. The accident flight departed about 5:30pm. The flights operated out of the airstrip at the operator's facility.

Mr. Andel noted that the pilot always fueled the airplane to about 3/4 capacity – 120 gallons – before each flight. The pilot was applying Grazon P+D to a pasture – about 105 acres – during the accident flight. The herbicide load consisted of about 460 gallons (water and chemicals) and would be expected to take about 30 minutes to spray.

Mr. Andel reported that this was the first time the pilot had sprayed that particular field. It was located immediately north of road and the parallel railroad tracks. The southwest corner of the field was located 1/2-mile east-northeast of the radio antenna tower. Before the flight, they had reviewed the hazards using Google Earth. Of note were the power lines running along the south side of the field and the antenna tower.

Mr. Andel recalled that it was a “beautiful day.” A northeast wind in the morning had turned to the southeast during the day. He recalled that it was clear with an east-southeast wind of about 10 knots at the time of the accident flight.

----- End of entries -----



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Date: October 17, 2018
Person Contacted: Douglas Harper
NTSB Accident Number: CEN19FA003 – Placedo, Texas

Narrative:

Mr. Harper stated that he was outside in his yard about 6:15pm when he observed the airplane fly over. He was located about 3 miles east-northeast of the radio antenna. The airplane seemed to be flying along the road in a west-southwesterly direction toward Placedo. It appeared to be level, and nothing seemed to be out of the ordinary, except that it seemed to be flying more slowly than other agricultural airplanes he had observed.

Mr. Harper responded to the accident site. He recalled seeing the radio antenna and noted that the airplane was approximately the same height as the missing section of the antenna.

----- End of entries -----



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Date: October 17, 2018
Person Contacted: William Paluka
NTSB Accident Number: CEN19FA003 – Placedo, Texas

Narrative:

Mr. Paluka stated that was at home about 6:15pm when he heard the airplane fly over. His home is located about 300 yards east of the radio antenna. After initially hearing the airplane, he recalled hearing the sound of it hitting the antenna and then the sound of an explosion. He went to a window and observed the airplane descending toward the ground. From the initial sound, he thought that the airplane was westbound immediately before striking the antenna.

Mr. Paluka recalled that weather as sunny and partly cloudy, with no restrictions to visibility. He added that it was a “pretty day.”

----- End of entries -----



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Central Region

Date: October 17, 2018
Person Contacted: John Sterling
NTSB Accident Number: CEN19FA003 – Placedo, Texas

Narrative:

Mr. Sterling reported that he was flying in the Port Lavaca area at the time of the accident. He estimated that he was 12 to 15 miles from the site. He observed a black plume on the horizon and then smoke rising into the air. He realized that this was likely immediately after the airplane had struck the tower. He did not observe the airplane itself.

Mr. Sterling described the weather at the time as “descent” and recalled that it was a “bright, sunny” day.

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