

From: [REDACTED]
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Piper Cherokee accident near Cartersville, GA
Date: Monday, October 15, 2018 2:33:06 PM

Ms. Liedler,

I am writing with the hope of helping to establish a time line for your investigation into the accident involving a Piper Cherokee near Cartersville, GA on Saturday, October 13, 2018. I was one of three pilots operating Delta flight 81 from Brussels, Belgium to Atlanta's Hartsfield Airport in a Boeing 767-300ER aircraft. I was flying in the relief pilot position and occupying the jump seat during our descent and arrival into Atlanta. We were flying the ONDRE 1 Arrival with the runway 27L transition. Just as we received our 27L runway assignment, and while talking to Atlanta approach control, I heard a "mayday" call in my headset while maintaining a listening watch on frequency 121.5 on our second radio. The radio call was simply "mayday mayday mayday, Cherokee ---" (--- represents what could have been a call sign, but I did not hear it clearly enough to identify it) That was his only transmission. Several other flights, also on frequency 121.5, very carefully and professionally, tried to communicate with the mayday Cherokee and offer assistance. I never heard a reply from the Cherokee but felt some level of assurance that his mayday call had been heard with so many other flights trying to establish communication with him. We became busy with our approach and landing and through it all I never heard an ELT on frequency 121.5, nor did I ever hear a response from ATC, which I attributed limited radio reception due to his low altitude.

Sunday morning, out of concern, I searched the Atlanta news feeds and watched a local news station reporting the heartbreaking story of finding a Piper Cherokee in a field with no survivors. My reason for contacting authorities is that the reporter covering the TV story indicated they had no timeline of when the accident occurred. I can provide a timeline. On the Atlanta approach frequency, upon being assigned runway 27L, we were given a vector for sequence; this is when I heard the mayday call. I would estimate the time was in the 2:25PM Eastern to 2:35PM Eastern range.

In all of my years of flying, I have never heard that type of mayday call in my headset. The male voice was calm, deliberate, confident. He seemed to be sending the mayday as part of a well executed ditching procedure. I want his family to know that.

Thanks to you and the FAA for all you do for us, but specifically, thanks for listening to this concerned aviator. My family is praying for the family of that stoic aviator- God Bless.

John Comer
B767 First Officer-Delta Air Lines
Atlanta, GA

Home [REDACTED] Cell [REDACTED]

