



Record of Conversation

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Central Region

Date: 10/13/20
Subject: CEN20LA419, Mid-air Collision at San Marcos
Person Interviewed: Louis Escobar, N540LK Pilot

Mr. Escobar was piloting an experimental Team Rockets F-1 low-wing airplane when he was involved in a midair collision with a Cessna 172, N108VK, at the San Marcos Municipal Airport (HYI), TX on September 24, 2020, at 1918 CDT.

Mr. Escobar stated he was on a local flight which was no longer than 50 minutes when he returned to HYI. He recalled the traffic in the pattern, making the required radio calls, and entering downwind for Rwy 08. He saw an airplane in front of him that he thought was too close and slow so he announced he was doing a right 360° turn for spacing about midfield for Rwy 08. He “rejoined the downwind on a left 45” and abeam the Rwy 08 threshold he noticed another airplane in a wide pattern at his 2 o’clock position and below him. He understood that airplane to be one that was asking him about his location in the pattern and he told them he was about to turn base. He was concerned about the airplane below him and his impression was “they said that was probably us” and they would extend their downwind for spacing, so he decided to extend his downwind to give everyone extra spacing. That took him past Interstate 35. He made a turn into the runway at that point and “I had a clear, clear view of the runway, there was no traffic at all between me and the runway.” He recalled an aircraft making position calls while he was on final, which he assumed was the airplane he had seen at his 2 o’clock and that it was behind him. “Obviously, to what I understood they were behind me because obviously they were not between me and the runway.” He had a clear view of the runway and said there was no one between him and the runway. He made the 1 mile call and shortly after felt an impact. He looked to the right and saw the other airplane and then his airplane was at stall speed and plummeting to the ground.

Mr. Escobar was shown a Google Earth image of the area around HYI and he approximated the geographic locations where he made the 3.5 mile radio call before entering the traffic pattern, where he first entered the downwind leg, where he initiated the right 360° turn, and where he was located when he saw the airplane at his 2 o’clock position. He also estimated the location of

the “2 o’clock” airplane when he saw it. Those points are identified in the Google Earth images that follow, figures 1 and 2.

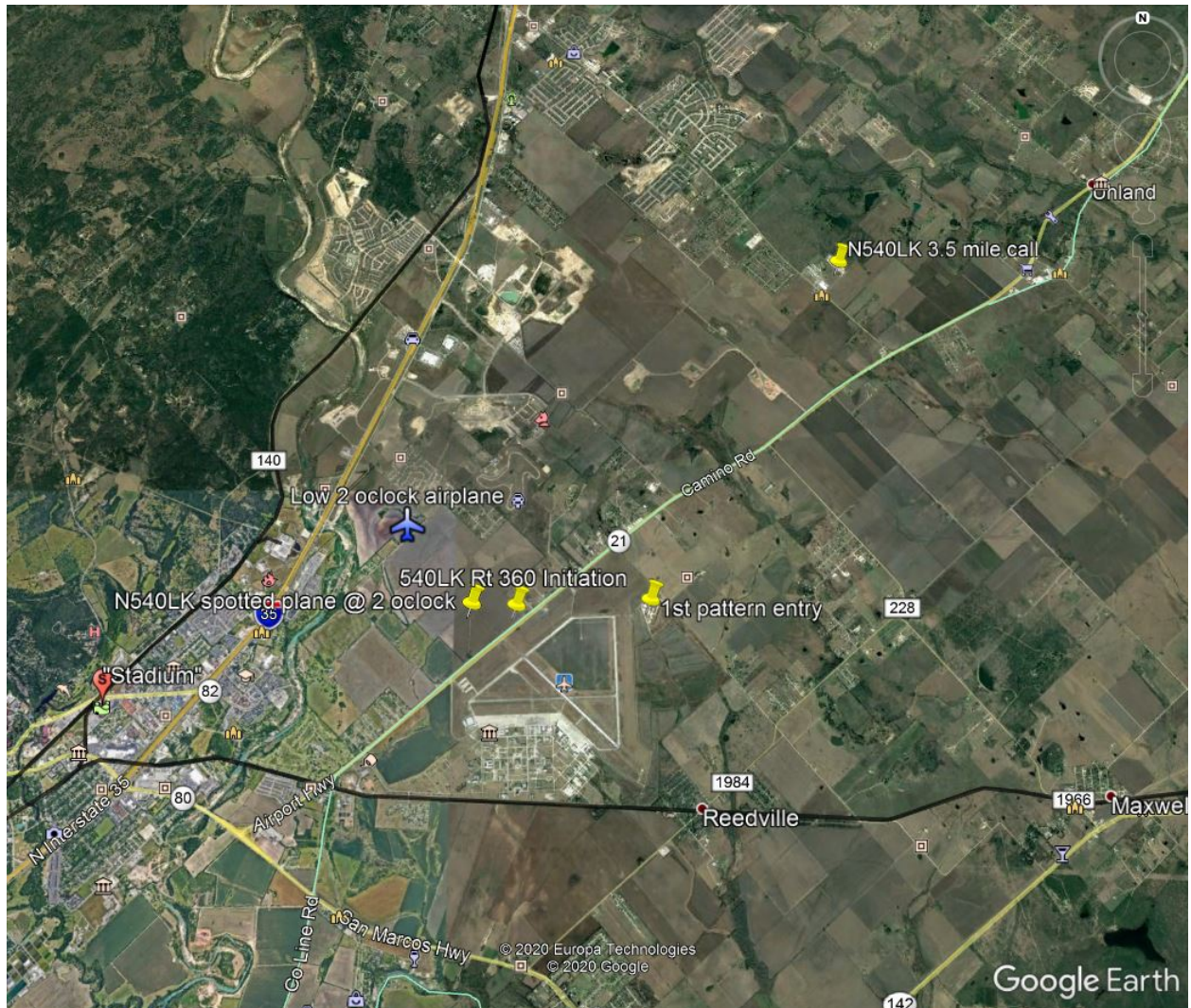


Figure 1

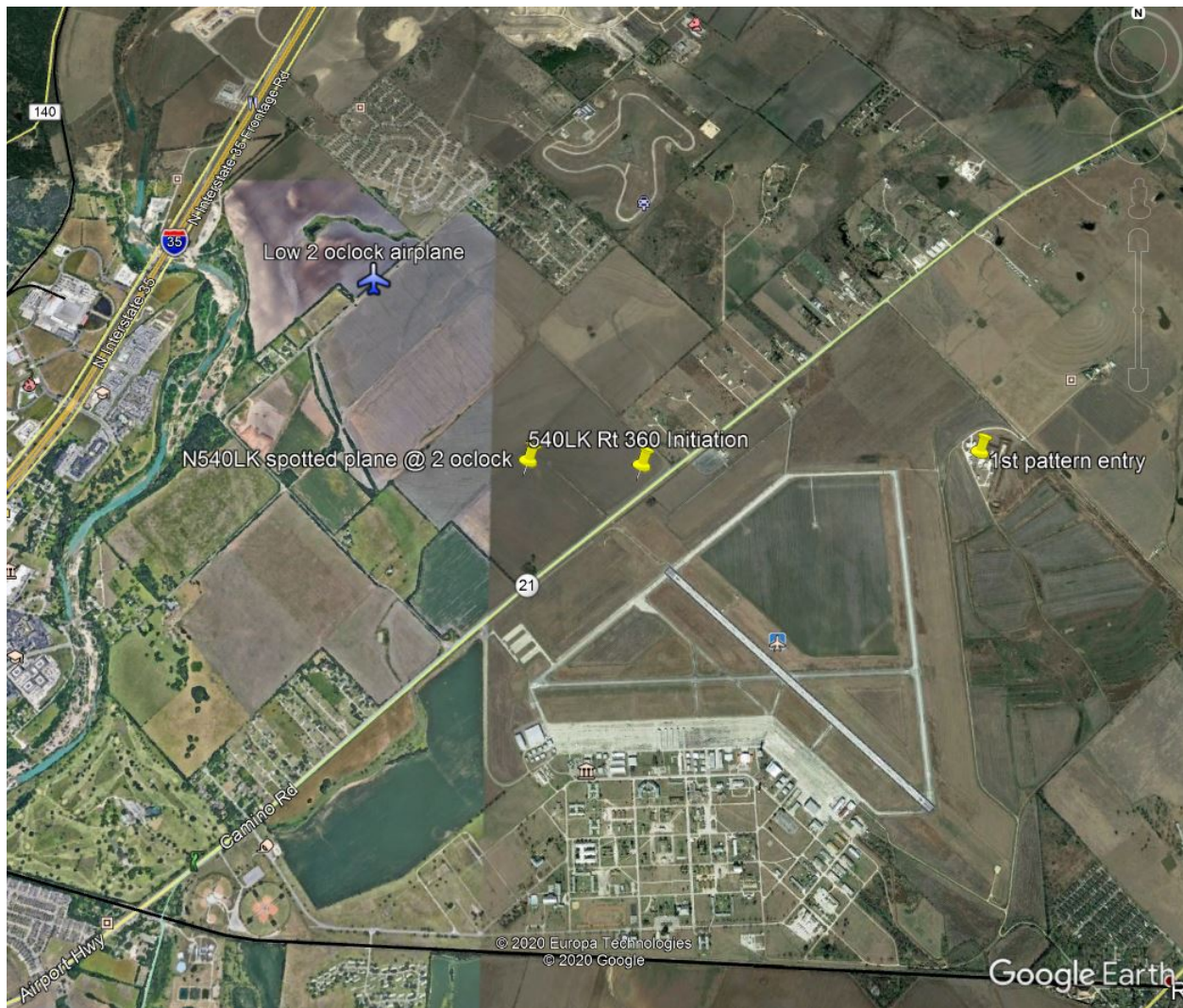


Figure 2

Mr. Escobar said he was descending from a higher altitude when he made the 3.5 mile radio call and he entered the downwind at pattern altitude of 1,600 ft at 100-110 mph, which he said was slower than normal due to all the traffic in the pattern. He said he was perfectly level with the airplane in front of him when he first entered downwind.

Mr. Escobar estimated the airplane he saw at his 2 o'clock position was a couple hundred feet lower than him.

Mr. Escobar identified the Texas State University stadium west of I-35 on an extended runway centerline for Rwy 08 as the "Stadium" used as a local traffic pattern reference.

He turned base in the vicinity of the stadium. He flew final approach about 78. He did not recall what altitude he was at when he rolled out on final.

He recalled some traffic in the pattern having difficulty seeing other airplanes in the pattern and hearing the tower call turns. He said the tower normally closes at 7 pm. He recalled the sun was still visible above the horizon at the time of the accident.

He recalled an airplane making a 2 mile final radio call, but he thought they were behind him since it was visually clear between him and the runway. He could not recall specific callsigns of the airplanes in the pattern.