



Michael J. Hodges
Investigator-In-Charge
Office of Aviation Safety, Central Regional Office

Date: 07/17/2023

Subject: CEN23FA304

Contact: Ty Dinsdale, Airport Manager

Ty is the airport manager for the Grand Glaize Airport (K15) in Osage Beach, Missouri. N8225N arrived on July 12, 2023, about 1030 local time. The airplane did not receive any fuel at K15. The airplane remained overnight until the day of the accident on Thursday, July 13, 2023.

Ty will send the NTSB security camera footage of the airplane while it was at K15.

Nothing Follows

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Date: 07/15/2023

Subject: CEN23FA304

Contact: Jeff Adams (N8225N, Piper PA-28-140, airplane owner)

Jeff has owned the airplane since April 2014. The airplane is based at the Carrollton Memorial Airport (K26) in Carrollton, Missouri. Jeff keeps the airplane inside a hangar at the airport.

Jeff is friends with the parents of the accident pilot, Hayden Ritchhart. Hayden learned to fly in the accident airplane. He was very familiar with the airplane. Hayden's had Jeff's permission to use the airplane when he wanted.

Jeff had flown with Hayden before, with Hayden as a passenger. Jeff has not flown with Hayden since Hayden started flight training. Jeff never had any concerns with Hayden's ability as a pilot.

On Wednesday July 12, 2023, Hayden flew with his father at K26. He filled the airplane straight to the tabs at K26 with fuel, they flew the pattern twice at K26, and then departed Hayden departed by himself to K26. It took him about an hour to get to the Grand Glaize Airport (K15) in Osage Beach, Missouri. He should have had about half fuel (around 25 gallons) for the local area flight when the accident occurred.

The airplane was stationed overnight at K15. Hayden took Evan Vandiver (the brother of Hayden's girlfriend) and Gary Vandiver (the father of Hayden's girlfriend) for a local area flight to view scenery.

For the airplane's stall warning system, it had a light and a horn in the cockpit. Both items were functional. The airplane had a manual trim system. The manual trim control was located on the top of the cockpit, on the roof.

There were no known mechanical issues with the airplane.

Nothing Follows



Michael J. Hodges
Aviation Accident Investigator / Investigator-In-Charge
Office of Aviation Safety, Central Regional Office

Date: November 29, 2023

Subject: CEN23FA304

The NTSB investigator-in-charge interviewed Gary Vandiver. Gary was the sole survivor of the accident with N8225N (Piper PA-28-140 airplane) that occurred on July 13, 2023, in Osage Beach, Missouri. Gary sustained serious injuries from the accident. Gary does not have an aviation background.

The purpose of the local area flight was to go sightseeing around the Lake of the Ozarks. The pilot (Hayden Ritchhart) reported the flight should last for about 30 minutes. The plan was for the airplane to depart from and return to the same airport. Gary's son, Evan Vandiver, was also onboard the airplane.

This was Gary's and Evan's first time flying with Hayden in N8225N. Gary's daughter, who was Hayden's girlfriend at the time, had flown with Hayden previously in N8225N.

Gary offered to purchase some fuel for the airplane for the flight, but Hayden declined and stated that he needed to burn off some fuel anyway during the flight.

Hayden did the preflight inspection with Gary and Evan present. The pilot did not mention any concerns with the airplane to Gary or Evan during the preflight inspection.

Hayden did not ask Gary or Evan about their weights prior to departing, for weight and balance purposes. Gary estimated his weight to be about 250 pounds at the time of the accident and Evan was estimated to weigh about 170 pounds at the time of the accident.

Hayden did not conduct a passenger safety briefing with Gary and Evan.

For the flight, Hayden was sitting in the front left seat. Gary was sitting in the front right seat. Evan was sitting in the rear left seat, somewhat sideways, but his feet were positioned behind the front right seat. Gary reported that he and Evan did not use a restraint system, nor did he recall seeing restraint systems installed in the airplane. Gary believes that perhaps Hayden was not using a restraint system, but he wasn't exactly sure.

During the runup, Gary had the cockpit door opened a bit because it was very hot outside. Prior to taking off, Gary closed and secured the cockpit door.

Gary did not recall if Hayden used and referenced a checklist once everyone was inside of the airplane.

Gary does not know if Hayden adjusted the overhead manual trim system (mounted on the top of the interior of the cockpit) prior to departure or during the takeoff.

During the takeoff, it seemed like the airplane was not climbing as much as it should have. During the takeoff, it seemed that Hayden was perhaps fighting the flight controls for an unknown reason. Hayden then said, "what the fuck." Gary did know what Hayden meant by saying "what the fuck." Shortly after Hayden said that statement out loud, the airplane did a violent turn to the right, and it seemed like the airplane went straight down. The turn to the right and the airplane going straight down seemed to happen at the same time. Hayden did not say anything further after the "what the fuck" statement.

Gary and Evan did not touch any flight controls in the airplane, at any time. Gary reported that he doesn't know how the flight controls work in the airplane.

Gary did not hear any sputtering or coughing noises emit from the engine during the runup or the takeoff.

Gary does not recall seeing any cockpit lights illuminate or hear any cockpit alarms activate during the takeoff.

Gary did not recall any events after the right turn and the airplane going straight down. The next event Gary recalled after that, was being in the hospital receiving medical treatment.

If Gary can recall any further information, he reported he will reach out to the NTSB.

Nothing Follows