

Bradley Miller
Aviation Accident Investigator
AS-CEN

Date: February 7, 2024

Subject: Record of Conversation

Contact: Ronald Wolf, Pilot N811CW
Donald Eick, NTSB Senior Meteorologist (AS-30)

Pilot interview notes regarding phone interview with Ronald Wolf, the accident pilot. The interview was conducted by Donald Eick and me, on February 7, 2024, from 1100 to 1143 eastern standard time.

- Pilot holds an ATP, A&P, and CFI ratings and has flown helicopters and fixed wing aircraft. Experience from helicopters in the Gulf of Mexico, corporate flight departments, firefighting and other aerial survey work, including flight instruction. Started flying at the age of 16.
- Started out that day flying from IYA to ABI and then back to IYA.
- Preflight weather briefing by ForeFlight for the departure and return flights received before departing IYA
- Biggest concern for the flight was any convective activity, flew below the freezing level and avoided all threats of icing.
- Aircraft had a Garmin 750 installed which had Nexrad imagery from XM radio, no airborne weather radar or lightning detection.
- Pilot indicated he was monitoring the weather echoes for 50 to 60 miles prior to the encounter, which his radar and ATC said were south of his

route. Did not notice any significant movement in the echoes. Did not have an iPad for NEXRAD to see echo tops product to evaluate storms.

- His Garmin display had him clear of the 3-levels (green-yellow-red) areas. Could not recall the distance from the echo at the time, but indicated he was attempting to remain outside of all the echo. Indicated that both ATC and his display were in agreement. The latency was consistent at about 3-5 minutes between images.
- ATC provided routing to avoid the echo.
- Encounter was short, he encountered light rain, then heavy rain and hail, and severe turbulence, he immediately slowed to maneuvering speed, switched off the autopilot, kept the wings level.
- During encounter he advised ATC of his situation and was given immediate clearance for any altitude and any heading
- Upon exiting the area he advised ATC and they were surprised about the hail encounter.
- Pilot felt like the aircraft had a load of ice on it, the way the aircraft was handling, he also could see some of the access panels missing and some of the hail damage and decided to divert and get the aircraft on the ground as soon as practical.
- Diversion field was based on familiarization, services available, and based on the current weather conditions.
- Not as trusting of Nexrad imagery and will plan greater avoidance in the future.
- In discussion preflight briefing and convection, he indicated his primary product he used to review was the radar summary or radar imagery. Knows of the convective outlook but rarely reviews. Storm severity does make a difference and specifically routing to avoid the expected convection.
- Pilot had not seen the NTSB Safety Alert on Nexrad Latency, but was generally aware of the issue.
- Pilot indicated just had a new windscreen installed prior to the accident, which came out without a scratch. While the fuselage and wings took the significant hail damage.

- Pilot indicated he had looked at several images of the radar conditions afterwards but would like to see the weather factual and more details of the conditions he had encountered.