



RECORD OF INTERVIEW

Dennis Diaz
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National Transportation Safety Board
Office of Aviation Safety - Eastern Region

Date: August 15, 2014 at 1115 EDT
Person(s) Interviewed: Joe Mentasana - Passenger
NTSB Case Number: ERA14LA389

Narrative:

- Mr. Mentasana is a friend of the pilot, Jeff “Bumper” Branblett, and they were flying with Bumper’s cousin from Texas to Florida. They decided to make an intermediate stop in Mobile, Alabama for refreshment and fuel. Mr. Mentasana was not sure if they had begun their descent into mobile, but stated that while flying at 9,500 feet the engine suddenly lost power. Bumper told him and the other passenger to tighten their restraints as they were having a very serious problem. The pilot subsequently declared an emergency to air traffic control and requested to be vectored to the nearest airport.
- Upon realizing that they would not be able to reach the diversion airport the pilot prepared to land the airplane in a field below. As they approached the field, the airplane’s tail struck a tree, and the fuselage then slammed to the ground. Mr. Mentasana then successfully extricated the pilot, who was trapped in the wreckage. The rear seat passenger had been partially ejected, and he also helped extricate him. Throughout the extrication he was concerned that the airplane would catch fire, as the wings were leaking considerable amounts of fuel.
- They had last filled the airplane with fuel in “Sherman.”
- While in the hospital, Mr. Mentasana spoke with the pilot and passenger, who both stated that they could not recall the accident.