



NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Who: Jeff Suveg, Assistant Airport Manager, Brandywine Airport, PA

When: March 29, 2015

ERA15FA171

In a telephone conversation, Mr. Suveg stated that he knew the pilot and flight instructor involved in the accident that involved N6842W. The pilot, who also owned the airplane, hired the flight instructor, Robert Boch, to give him a biennial flight review.

Mr. Suveg said that he watched the airplane depart runway 27 at 1:30 pm EDT on March 29, 2015. Once the airplane became airborne, the engine sputtered, got quiet, and then re-started. As the airplane neared the end of the runway, the engine sputtered again and re-started. Mr. Suveg then saw the airplane make a left hand turn. The engine sputtered again and then he saw the airplane's left wing drop. The airplane descended and disappeared from view. About 20 seconds later he saw black smoke rising up from where he last saw the airplane.

Mr. Suveg immediately responded to where he saw the smoke and found the airplane completely consumed in fire. He said the entire airplane was in one area consistent with it descending directly into the ground.

Mr. Suveg said the airplane had last refueled at the airport on February 3rd. He was not sure if the pilot had flown the airplane since then, but was aware that the pilot liked to keep the airplane topped off with fuel. Mr. Suveg described the weather as clear skies and a light cross-wind about 10 knots.

Leah D. Yeager
Sr. Air Safety Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board



NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Who: Robert Morrill, witness

When: March 29, 2015

ERA15FA171

In a telephone conversation, Mr. Morrill stated that the pilot and flight instructor were departing for the purpose of conducting a biennial flight review. He saw the airplane depart runway 27 and become airborne about two-thirds down the runway. As soon as it began to climb, the engine "sputtered badly then came back online." The airplane continued with the takeoff. When it reached the end of the runway, the engine sputtered again and it was clear the airplane was struggling to gain altitude. Mr. Morrill said the airplane then entered a left turn, followed by another left turn, when the left wing dropped. The airplane entered a spin and descended directly down toward the ground.

Mr. Morrill said the airplane had been "sitting for a while" at the airport and just had its annual inspection completed.

Leah D. Yeager
Sr. Air Safety Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Timothy W. Monville
Sr. Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region

Date: April 2, 2015
Person Contacted: Robert "Douglas" Stewart
NTSB Accident Number: ERA15FA171

Narrative:

Mr. Robert "Douglas" Stewart was interviewed at his house on March 31, 2015, at 1700 EDT. He was interviewed at [REDACTED], West Chester, PA [REDACTED]

He provided a cell phone number of [REDACTED] and an e-mail address of [REDACTED]

He indicated that he does not know any of the 2 occupants of the accident airplane. He indicated that he soloed in 2000 or 2001 in a Cessna, but did not become a private pilot. On the date of the accident, he was walking his dog at the approach end of runway 27 while talking with his wife. He reported seeing a beige colored low wing airplane taxi onto the runway; his view was about 20 feet away from the right side. He did not hear an engine run-up, but reported that a run-up could have been performed. He noted the airplane begin the takeoff from runway 27, but the takeoff was aborted which took him by surprise. The airplane turned off the 2nd turnoff; the time was 1327. He reported he did not hear any abnormal engine sounds associated with the aborted takeoff. He continued his walk to the other side of the runway having a view of the left side of the airplane. He did not hear an engine run-up, and reported when the airplane was about ½ way down the runway while on the ground, he heard 4 "pop" sounds followed by a loud "pop" sound. The "pop" sounds quit and the airplane rotated and began to climb. An estimated 5 seconds later, the engine then popped 8 times, and at that time the airplane was between 10 to 100 feet above ground level and about ¾ way down the runway. At that time he told himself that was not good. He did not see any smoke trailing the airplane. He could not tell if the engine continued to run, and told himself "don't climb." He estimated the 8 popping sounds were over a period of 1-2 seconds, and at that time the airplane was wings level. The airplane then banked to the left which he described as wings vertical, and then reported seeing the airplane pitch nose down. He lost sight of the airplane, and noted black colored smoke about 1 minute later which changed to white in color. He approximated the airplane reached a total height of about 200 feet.

The digest was e-mailed to him for review on March 31, 2015, about 2145 EDT. He replied on April 1, 2015, at 0948 EDT, with, “Mr. Monville, Thank you for meeting with me to discuss my observations of the events leading to the crash of the Piper aircraft at Brandywine Airport on March 29, 2015. I reviewed your draft of the minutes of our meeting and only have two comments. First, you noted my email address incorrectly. It should read: [REDACTED]

Also, the only substantive comment is that I approximated the plane reached a total height of about 200'. That seems important to me. I did not note any other substantive issues with your report.

Again I appreciate the time you spent with me. If I can provide any additional information, please do not hesitate to call. Also, if you are able to provide me with a copy of the final report, I would appreciate it, [Thank] you.

Doug Stewart”

These changes were incorporated into the narrative.



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Timothy W. Monville
Sr. Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region

Date: May 29, 2015
Person Contacted: Helena Ciechanowski and Honore Poch
NTSB Accident Number: ERA15FA171

Narrative:

Mrs. Helena Ciechanowski contacted NTSB on April 2, 2015, at 1516 EDT, returning my call to her cell phone of [REDACTED]. She called from [REDACTED].

Her mother was nearby and I asked if her mother had heard any radio calls on the UNICOM or common traffic advisory frequency (CTAF). Her mother advised she had not, that at the time of the accident she was downstairs, and the radio dispatch is upstairs. I asked if her mother could tell the exact seating locations when the airplane was taxied out, and she stated she did not see anybody in the airplane. It was indicated that Jeff, may have seen what seats each occupant was in. Her mother did indicate that she heard her husband and Mr. Deal discussing the maintenance of the airplane, verifying that the airplane was signed off to fly. Mr. Deal went to the airplane first, followed by her husband.

They indicated they have several of pilot logbooks for their husband/father, the latest of which, No. 9, contains entries from February 2013, to the last entry dated March 28, 2015. I asked if they would copy each page that contains an entry and Helena advised she would do so and would mail the copies to me.

The digest was e-mailed to them for review on April 2, 2015, about 1930 EDT. She/They replied on April 3, 2015, at 2005 EDT, with, "Thank you. I have reviewed the digest with my mother and we have nothing to change. Thank you, Helena Ciechanowski."



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Timothy W. Monville
Sr. Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region

Date: May 29, 2015
Person Contacted: John Kassab, OQN Airport Manager
NTSB Accident Number: ERA15FA171

Narrative:

Mr. Kassab was contacted by phone on April 2, 2015, at 1609 EDT. He was contacted at [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] He provided an e-mail address of [REDACTED] and a cell phone number
of [REDACTED]

He indicated that he owns a Piper PA-28, and heard a story about 30 years ago about a PA-28 that had the fuel strainer sump stick open during a preflight inspection, but because the fuel had stopped dripping, the pilot did not notice the sump drain was not closed. The pilot of that airplane attempted to takeoff, but noticed a problem, and subsequently landed.

He inspected the ramp where the airplane had been sitting and noticed a fuel stain. He took pictures and will send.

He was asked if the airplane had been flown since the annual inspection had been informed. He indicated to his knowledge it had not.

The digest was e-mailed to him for review on April 2, 2015, about 1913 EDT. He replied on April 2, 2015, at 2206 EDT, with, "...The notes of our phone interview are correct. There are no changes necessary."



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Timothy W. Monville
Sr. Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region

Date: May 29, 2015
Person Contacted: Bob Morrill
NTSB Accident Number: ERA15FA171

Narrative:

Mr. Morrill contacted NTSB on April 2, 2015, at 1637 EDT, returning my call to his cell phone of [REDACTED] earlier today at 1603 EDT. He provided an e-mail address of [REDACTED]

He indicated that he is a private pilot with about 640 hours total time, and had previously met Mr. Deal, and was actually taking instrument flight training with Mr. Poch.

He indicated that on the date and time of the accident he was outside the FBO facing the runway, and when using Google Earth pinpointed the location as 39 degrees 59 minutes 22.87 seconds North latitude and 075 degrees 34 minutes 45.35 seconds West longitude. He was outside smoking a cigarette, and was with Jeff Suveg.

He indicated that he heard about the aborted takeoff from Kirk Simme, who asked him why the airplane had aborted. He did not witness the abort occurring, nor did he hear the takeoff or power reduction associated with the aborted takeoff. He did notice the airplane taxiing on the taxiway in an east bound direction towards the approach end of runway 27. The airplane went out of his view and he did not see if it taxied to the end of the runway. He notice the airplane departing runway 27, and stated it became airborne when the airplane was abeam the windsock. When the airplane was 2 to 3 feet above the runway, he heard sputtering that lasted 3 to 4 seconds. During this time the airplane travelled the length of two centerline markings. He noted the nose was levelled off, and engine power was restored. The airplane at that time was nearly directly in front of his position. He indicating the sputtering was enough to call his attention, and Jeff who was with him said "put it down" three times.

The airplane continued the takeoff climb, and when the airplane was over 202, at about 200 feet above ground level, the engine "sputtered badly again." The airplane banked to the left, and flew

along 202 in a southerly direction. He could not tell if the engine was still running, and while in a slight nose-up attitude, the left wing dropped and the airplane entered a spin. About 10 seconds later he saw smoke, and Jeff rushed to the scene.

He indicated that they did not have a portable VHF radio, but if he had a radio, he would have used it to yell “abort” when the sputtering occurred when the airplane was just above the runway.

The digest was e-mailed to him for review on April 2, 2015, about 1900 EDT. He replied on April 7, 2015, at 1534 EDT, with, “Timothy, This is accurate except for it was more like two centerline markings when it was sputtering, I went out and checked on Sunday. Thanks, Bob Morrill.” These changes were incorporated into the narrative summary.



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Timothy W. Monville
Sr. Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region

Date: February 25, 2016
Person Contacted: John Kassab
NTSB Accident Number: ERA15FA171

Narrative:

Mr. Kassab was contacted by phone on February 25, 2016, at 1301 EST. He was called a [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

With the aid of Google Earth, he identified the location of the windsock. It was located at 39 degrees 59 minutes 26.33 seconds West longitude and 075 degrees 34 minutes 50.57 seconds West longitude. That location was located about 1,070 feet down the runway.

With respect to fuel, he indicated there have been no fuel related issues.

He indicated that the airplane had not previously been flown for a number of years. At the beginning of the call he asked if there was a way to detect water had been ingested in an engine.

He also reiterated the finding about the fuel stain on the ramp where the airplane had been parked. He relayed an incident in which a fuel strainer had been left open in a similar airplane during preflight inspection, and during the initial climb the engine lost power. He indicated that the engine resumed power when the climb was stopped.

The digest was reviewed with him during the call and he agreed with the content.



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Timothy W. Monville
Sr. Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region

Date: February 25, 2016
Person Contacted: Terrence Arthur Heim
NTSB Accident Number: ERA15FA171

Narrative:

Mr. Heim was contacted by phone on February 25, 2016, at 1358 EST. He was called at [REDACTED]

At the beginning of the phone call he was advised that the NTSB is a federal agency mandated by Congress to investigate aircraft accidents, and NTSB has no authority to take any action against any individual. He was also informed that any person NTSB talks with has the right to representation; he agreed to the interview without representation.

He indicated that he is an Airframe and Powerplant Mechanic with Inspection Authorization (IA). His certificate number is [REDACTED]. He has been a mechanic for about 6 years and has been an IA for about 2 years. He provided a cell phone number of [REDACTED] and an e-mail address of [REDACTED].

He indicated that he knew Mr. Deal casually, and had helped him obtain the ferry permit for the airplane. He indicated that the engine ran great during the flight, and after landing he parked the airplane outside the hangar, and went to other duties, and had lunch. Later the same day he brought the airplane into the hangar, and it was there that he noticed the fuel strainer was leaking. After the annual inspection was completed he did not test fly the airplane but reported he performed an engine run-up and noticed no discrepancies. He then determined after the annual was signed off that the oil temperature gauge was inoperative. Following the repairs he did an extensive engine run-up which included running the engine to full static rpm; no discrepancies were reported. It was only after the annual inspection was completed did the airplane get moved the spot on the ramp.

About 1 week before the accident he reported that Mr. Deal who worked across the street came into his shop.

The digest was e-mailed to him for review on February 25, 2016, at 1445 EST. He replied the same day at 1514 EST, with, "Mr.Monville, This is to confirm I received the email with the draft of our previous conversation. No changes are necessary. Regards, Terry Heim"



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Timothy W. Monville
Sr. Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region

Date: March 1, 2016
Person Contacted: Terrence Arthur Heim
NTSB Accident Number: ERA15FA171

Narrative:

Mr. Heim was contacted by phone on February 29, 2016, at 1219 EST. He was called at [REDACTED] and left a voice mail message. He returned the call the same day at 1404 EST, calling from [REDACTED]

He indicated that with respect to the two engine runs after the annual inspection was completed, both were done in front of the hangar which was about 150 feet from the tie-down spot. He confirmed that the gascolator drain valve was the locking type, and was asked if he had any pictures of the gascolator. He thought he had pictures associated with the ferry flight and indicated he would check; he later indicating by e-mail that he did not have any pictures. He also indicated by e-mail that he airplane was beige with brown stripes. He stated that when he was done with the engine runs his typical procedure is to place the fuel selector in the off position if the airplane was not to be flown or worked on later, and feels that it is reasonable following the second engine run that he did follow his typical procedure and place the fuel selector to the off position.

The digest was e-mailed to him for review on March 1, 2016, at 0927 EST. He replied the same day at 1136 EST, with, "Hi Tim, I have reviewed the draft, no changes are necessary. Thanks, Terry."