

Hicks Ralph

From: [REDACTED] Savickas [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, August 04, 2015 2:13 PM
To: Hicks Ralph
Subject: Statements for N6566D Reading, PA accident

My recollection of the Rockwell Commander Incident in Centre township Aug 2, 2015
Debra L. Deisher , private pilot # [REDACTED]

Dave Kalbach and I departed KRDG for a short flight in the area at 3000' MSL. I was flying and intending to fly over my house, I just spotted the very distinct "P" of our development, when suddenly Dave said, "We just lost an engine." My first response was, "You're kidding." My thought went to, "We only have one." At that point, troubleshooting began and Dave took complete control. He called tower, told them we were not able to make it back to the airport, where we were located and to send emergency personnel. They asked if we were declaring an emergency and he said, "Yes, we are!" I believe that was our last contact with them. He then asked me to get out the engine failure checklist. I did so and began reading it out loud, step by step. I asked, "Can't we restart?"

He said no. We were both looking for the best suitable field and preparing to get down safely. The field we choose was an uphill field that appeared to be rather level, but turned out to be very uneven. (like large waves in the dirt.....hills and valleys??) When we originally touched down, we were promptly pushed back into the air because of the hills. I'm not sure how many times we bounced but we were heading towards a large dead tree and houses. Dave maneuvered slightly to the left of the tree, striking it with the wing, which took away any further control of the aircraft. It spun us around. I don't seem to remember the details after the tree strike. We were actually calm during the whole event. When we came to a stop, we sat there for a moment, and realized we were perfectly fine! I then looked out my window and saw fuel spilling out. I mentioned this and said, "We need to get out." I believe Dave said the same thing at the same time. He then continued with turning off all the switches. We both got out safely. Local people were right there asking if we were okay. Dave called KRDG tower and emergency vehicles arrived shortly thereafter.

Dave did an amazing and excellent professional job of keeping us safe and alive. I could not have had a better pilot with me. When I saw the condition of the aircraft, I was amazed that we were unscathed.

Debra's email is: [REDACTED]

Statement from David Kalbach (PIC - N6566D)

On Saturday 8/01/15 I, David Kalbach along with Private Pilot Deb Deisher departed KRDG for a quick flight.

Approximately 30 minutes into the flight while heading back to the field (KRDG) at 3000' MSL - 7 NW of KRDG the engine seemed to lose power for a second, and then again one second after that, another second goes by and the engine had shut off completely. I immediately ran through engine failure procedures; I turned on the Electric Boost Pump, — No Changes — I switched Fuel Tanks from BOTH to LEFT — No Changes — (waited 5 approximately 5 seconds) — No Changes — Switched Fuel Tanks back to BOTH — NO CHANGES — Switched Fuel Tank to RIGHT (Waited 5 Seconds) — No Changes — Switched Fuel Selector back to BOTH - and left it there. I pitched for BEST GLIDE and Radio'd the KRDG APPROACH advising them of our current situation, and that we would be heading down for an off-field landing at our current location - I requested emergency equipment and authorities to be notified.

ATC then advised if I was declaring an emergency, to which I replied, "YES, I AM..."

We began to lose radio contact at that point (approx 1500' MSL) as I descended towards what looked like a descent field to land upon. As we grew closer I realized the field had a fairly significant pitch to the left of our landing path. I then

decided to select a field adjacent to my intended site approximately 500 Yds to the LEFT and headed towards this new site. I selected this site above all others as it had an uphill slope to our landing path which I felt would help to dissipate our speed. Unbeknownst to me, until it was too late to make any changes this field had a fairly aggressive undulating terrain, with many peaks and valleys that could not have been seen from above. Gear Down and Full Flaps we continued to the field, our last resort.

We contacted the field at one of the high spots of the terrain which literally skipped us back in to the air — unable to bleed of any more speed and running out of field ahead I did my best to maneuver the plane away from the nearest house to a spot between two trees, contacting the tree to the right with the wing tip. This contact turned the airplane 90 degrees to the right where I believe the wing dug on the ground momentarily slowing the aircraft, initiating a roll to the left causing the left wing to strike the ground further dissipating our speed. I believe we rolled right and then left again before sliding to a literal stop on the field. My friend and co-pilot then said “there is fuel leaking on this side of the plane.” I immediately asked her to get out of the plane while I began to shut off all fuel and electrical switches.

I then opened my door to exit, and for the first time realized that the right wing was nearly gone. I jumped out and immediately phoned the control tower to advise them of our situation and our status. We then asked a local by-stander the address and relayed that information to the Control Tower (KRDG) to send rescue equipment.

Fortunately no one was injured or harmed in this incident. Unfortunately, the aircraft was destroyed.

Dave's email: [REDACTED] cell phone number [REDACTED].

— David A. Kalbach
Certificate# [REDACTED]

Thomas Savickas
Maintenance Safety Inspector
Allentown, PA FSDO
[REDACTED]