

Record of Telephone Conversation

Name: Alex Breckner, pilot of N [REDACTED]

Address:

Phone: [REDACTED]

Date: 8/4/16 5:17 pm

Description: Witness to CE-414 N2735A departing KDTs on 8/2/2016

Alex is a helicopter pilot and flies air tours in an R-44 for [REDACTED] Alex was returning to Destin for landing at approximately 8:25 pm after completing an introductory flight with three passengers on board. He was flying N [REDACTED]

He heard an aircraft call for traffic advisory in the area of Destin and say that he was departing runway 14. Alex stated that he advised the aircraft that he was a helicopter on left base to runway 32 to land on the pad west of Alpha taxiway. He remembers stating that he would be east of and well clear of the runway and that the runway was "all yours" to the other aircraft.

AM West
Alex saw the aircraft departing 14 and the pilot sounded fine on the radio. He passed the aircraft near the approach end of 32. Alex thought he was at approximately 300 feet and the airplane was just below him, between 200 and 300 feet and over the 32 numbers, climbing.

As he was landing on the pad, he saw the airplane still climbing out over the condos south of the airport. He was well above the condos, at an estimated altitude of 1000.'

Nothing seemed out of the ordinary and he did not hear the airplane on CTAF again after the pilot reported departing 14 and thanked Alex for the advisory.

[REDACTED]
Nina A. McBride
Aviation Safety Inspector, OPS
AL/NW Florida FSDO, SO-09

Record of Telephone Conversation

Name: Ken Spivey, Pilot, Piper PA-31T Cheyenne, N [REDACTED]

Address:

Phone: [REDACTED]

Date: 8/5/2016 8:49 a.m.

Description: Possible witness to departure of N2735A from KDTS on 8/2/2016

Mr. Spivey stated he was seated at the controls of PA-31 N [REDACTED] on 8/2/2016 around 8:15 pm or so at Destin Jet South ramp. The aircraft was parked facing southeast, almost parallel to the runway. He was preparing to go flying to maintain his night currency for carrying passengers which was about to expire in a week or so. He had not started the engines yet. He heard an airplane rolling down the runway and noticed it as it passed by him. It was probably 50 – 100 feet in the air when it passed. It continued to climb from the runway and everything sounded normal. He did not really pay much attention to it because he was preparing to start his engines. He thinks the airplane was "clean" (the gear was up) but was not really sure.

Once he taxied out and got ready for takeoff, he heard Eglin Approach Control looking for the aircraft on the CTAF. Once airborne, Eglin Approach Control asked him if he could see the aircraft or if he could see anything below him in the water. Eglin said the aircraft had departed Destin but had never contacted them. He told them that he could not see an aircraft in the water or anywhere else.

Mr. Spivey then added that it was a moonless night and there was a high overcast which obscured the stars so it was completely dark over the gulf. Mr. Spivey said that he remembers that, as he made a right turn, he noticed that he could not see the shoreline lights because his low wing blocked the lights on land as he turned. He stated that it would be easy to get spatial disorientation making a right turn.

Mr. Spivey has over 3200 hours of flying in the Air Force and has been flying civilian from Destin Airport on and off for the last 3 years. He has about 180 hrs flying the Cheyenne.

He stated that anytime flying in or out of Destin at night can be a challenge because the darkness over the bay or gulf makes it tough to fly VFR. Mr. Spivey also stated that he had a passenger with him that night but the passenger is not a pilot and did not seem to paying attention to other aircraft. The passenger was also kind of shocked once they became aware that a plane had crashed just minutes before they took off.

[REDACTED]
Nina A. McBride
Aviation Safety Inspector, OPS
AL/NW Florida FSDO, SO-09

Record of Interview

Name: Casey Dietrich

Address: [REDACTED] Engine Calibration

Phone: [REDACTED]

Date: 8/5/2016 7:20 a.m.

Description: Witness to aircraft accident N2735A, KDTS on 8/2/2016

Mr. Dietrich is employed by [REDACTED] and was in Destin conducting engine calibration testing in the pressure chamber at Eglin Air Force base with a team of four other engineers. He and the team members were standing on the beach behind The Back Porch Restaurant at the bottom of the steps by the restaurant. They were standing in a circling talking just after 8:00 pm. It was dark out. Mr. Dietrich was facing the restaurant with his back to the beach. He heard an airplane, up high and watched it fly overhead. It came right over the restaurant headed towards the water and he could tell it was a twin engine. The aircraft began to sound louder and that's what made him turn around and watch the lights. It was about a quarter to a half mile off the beach over the water. He could see it bank to the right and watched the lights going to the right and descend. He then heard a thud and a big splash. It was getting pretty dark so he was able to see that it was an airplane when it passed over heard but then all he could see was lights over the water.

Mr. Dietrich has experience as a commercial airline passenger only.

[REDACTED]
Nina A. McBride
Aviation Safety Inspector, OPS
AL/NW Florida FSDO, SO-09

Record of Interview

Name: Jim Hingst
Address: [REDACTED] Engine Calibration
Phone: [REDACTED]
Date: 8/5/2016 7:50 a.m.
Description: Witness to aircraft accident N2735A, KDTS on 8/2/2016

Mr. Hingst is employed by [REDACTED] and was in Destin conducting engine calibration testing in the pressure chamber at Eglin Air Force Base with a team of four other engineers. He and the team members were standing on the beach behind The Back Porch Restaurant at the edge of the steps. Mr. Gaworecki was facing the water. He heard and saw an airplane overhead and thought it seemed low but because the airport is so close, he is not sure how high the planes are supposed to be when they come over the restaurant. He is not that familiar with aviation. He did not see the gear and does not think it was down. The airplane flew directly over the men or maybe slightly to the west. He watched it for a few seconds as it went out over the water and then looked away until Geff Brohl made a comment about the airplane. The plane had changed direction and now looked like it was parallel to the shoreline. He could see a green flashing light descending rapidly at 45° angle towards the horizon. It took just a few seconds for the light to go from the altitude he saw it into the ocean. He saw the splash and then 2 seconds later heard the splash and the thud. All the men agreed that the airplane went into the water directly out from the volleyball court just to their right. His observation was completely based on the moving green light because it was too dark to see the airplane.

[REDACTED]
Nina A. McBride
Aviation Safety Inspector, OPS
AL/NW Florida FSDO, SO-09

Record of Interview

Name: Paul Gaworecki
Address: [REDACTED] Engine Calibration
Phone: [REDACTED]
Date: 8/5/2016 7:40 a.m.
Description: Witness to aircraft accident N2735A, KDTS on 8/2/2016

Mr. Gaworecki is employed by [REDACTED] and was in Destin conducting engine calibration testing in the pressure chamber at Eglin Air Force Base with a team of four other engineers. He and the team members were standing on the beach behind The Back Porch Restaurant at the edge of the steps. Mr. Gaworecki was facing west. He heard an airplane overhead and looked up and saw a two engine airplane with a gray underside about 100 – 200 feet up which seemed low. It was lower than he expected and was directly over him. The engines sounded fine. The airplane cruised over them and Mr. Gaworecki stopped watching until he heard Geff Brohl say "that guy is really banking hard." Mr. Gaworecki looked back towards the airplane and saw it turning to the right and it seemed that the airplane was coming back towards them. It seemed like it was in a 70° bank. He watched it bank into the ocean. Then he heard a splash. He knew when it hit, that it hit hard. He could still hear the engines when it hit but it was faint. He did not notice if the landing gear was up or down.

He called 911 at 8:25 pm

[REDACTED]

Nina A. McBride
Aviation Safety Inspector, OPS
AL/NW Florida FSDO, SO-09

Record of Interview

Name: Geff Brohl

Address: [REDACTED] Engine Calibration

Phone: [REDACTED]

Date: 8/5/2016 7:30 a.m.

Description: Witness to aircraft accident N2735A, KDTS on 8/2/2016

Mr. Brohl is employed by [REDACTED] and was in Destin conducting engine calibration testing in the pressure chamber at Eglin Air Force Base with a team of four other engineers. He and the team members were standing on the beach behind The Back Porch Restaurant at the bottom of the steps approximately 40 feet from the restaurant. Mr. Dietrich had his back to the restaurant and was facing the water. He heard an airplane come overhead and it sounded good, like every other plane that had flown over them. It seemed like the plane was in a slight climb until it was about 100 - 200 yards out and then it stayed level and wasn't climbing. Then he saw it bank steeply to the right and thought that was a gutsy move in an airplane, low over the water. Mr. Brohl was too far away to hear the engines and there was a lot of background noise from the restaurant but saw the plane bank right and it looked like a pretty steep bank. Then it looked like he leveled out for a second and then hit the water at a 45° nose down but wings level. When he banked over, Mr. Brohl could see the whole top of the plane, the bank was that steep. He could see the silhouette of the airplane as it banked and then heard the splash and then heard a thud. He could not see any smoke, flames or parts flying off the airplane. The lights were visible on the aircraft all the way to the water.

[REDACTED]

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