



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Todd Gunther
Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region

Date: October 8, 2015
Person Contacted: Inspector Jim Ruckman (Nashville FSDO)
NTSB Accident Number: ERA16LA003

According to Inspector Ruckman, the Airplane took off from Runway 8 under visual flight rules (VFR), from Downtown Island Airport (DKX), Knoxville, Tennessee. The Airport was reporting a ceiling of 200 feet with 1/4 mile visibility when the airplane departed.

The airplane impacted trees and brush approximately 600 feet from the end of runway at an altitude of 10 feet. The airplane then impacted the ground in an open grassy field and slid on its belly with the gear up for another 500 feet before coming to rest.

The impact was high speed with indications of the engine at takeoff power. The airplane sustained substantial damage to the wings, tail, engine, and propeller. There was no fire.

Both the Pilot and passenger were injured and were transported to UT Medical Center in Knoxville, Tennessee.

Personnel at the airport observed there was zero visibility and they could not see the runway at the time of departure. The pilot was Instrument rated but there was no flight plan filed or communication with air traffic control.



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Date: October 14, 2015
Person Contacted: Daryll Parham (Line Service Manager)
NTSB Accident Number: ERA16LA003

According to Mr. Parham, he arrived at the airport about 0550. He could not see anything as it was "zero/zero".

He was notified of an emergency locator transmitter signal around 0612.

The traffic patrol pilot for the local television station tried to takeoff and see if he could locate the airplane but the visibility was too bad. The fog cleared about 1000.



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Date: October 15, 2015
Person Contacted: Dr. Christopher Landess (Pilot)
NTSB Accident Number: ERA16LA003

Dr. Landess was interviewed over the telephone.

According to Dr. Landess He checked the weather the day before the accident flight and it was forecast to be VFR.

He woke up at 0415 on the morning of the accident and checked the weather again, and it was still VFR.

On the day of the accident he was going to fly from Knoxville, Tennessee, to Morristown, Tennessee, and then on to Jacksonville, North Carolina.

Prior to departure, he and his passenger drank some coffee and talked, and then he preflighted the airplane. He then "turned the plane on, primed it, and it started right up."

He then listened to the AWOS, "which said that the ceiling was at 200 feet, the altimeter was 30.04, and it was calm," but "I could see stars."

He checked the magnetos, checked the propeller, and let the engine warm up. He then looked at his passenger and said; "are you ready?" He then took off from runway 8, brought the landing gear up, and looked at the attitude indicator to make sure he was climbing. He could not remember anything afterwards.

The next thing he remembered was talking on his phone after the accident occurred. The first responders triangulated off of his cell phone to find them. He also remembered that "the EPIRB was going off."



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Date: December 22, 2015
Person Contacted: Jeff Williams (Passenger)
NTSB Accident Number: ERA16LA003

Mr. Williams was interviewed over the telephone.

According to Mr. Williams, on the morning of the accident flight it was dark and foggy. He could remember the preflight, the engine warmup, the takeoff, and the landing gear going up (retracting). After that he could not remember anything except when he was being placed on a spine board at the accident scene and after being in the hospital.

Mr. Williams advised that he asked Dr. Landess about the flight and instrument procedures as he believed that Dr. Landess was instrument qualified, and Mr. Williams had piloted helicopters and some fixed wing aircraft before.

When asked if he could see the sky that morning, Mr. Williams said that it was too dark and foggy, for him to see the sky.

When asked why he did not use the installed shoulder harness, he advised that he did not know it was there.

When asked if he had been briefed about the use of the shoulder harness by Dr. Landess, he stated that he had not been briefed about the shoulder harness but had been briefed about how to exit the airplane door.