

Zachary Colescott

Post subject: Re: Cessna down last night Gatlinburg area

Posted: 30 Dec 2016, 09:50



Joined: 04/30/15
Posts: 10
Post Likes: +4
Aircraft: PA32R-300
Lance

Jim Sokoloff wrote:

There was an abrupt change in the late morning from "terrible" to "very good". I don't think any afternoon time had significant weather at Gatlinburg. It's possible that some surrounding areas could have still had weather, given the terrain nearby, but this looks like widespread clearing type of forecast and observations so I suspect they were good VMC.

Sorry, I'm a little late to the party. I was actually right in that area when this was taking place. No indication that it was going on though. Our route took us from [KRVN-VXV-KBGF](#). We came right over the top of KMOR, entered a cloud layer at approximately 5,000' +/- MSL and got on top at 7,000' MSL on our way up to 8,000'. We departed KRVN at approximately 1600 Eastern time. I took this photo shortly after climbing on top of the cloud layer (took it to diagnose an issue on the ground later). It is somewhere between KMOR and KTYS, looking south. Probably shot about 1620 or so Eastern. The layer stretched in all directions, tops staying about the same (for the most part) throughout our route. I only saw a few holes as we were coming over the top of KTYS...after that, solid until we descended back through for landing into Winchester.





If you take a look at the aircraft [track log from FlightAware](#) you see it cruising along between 9,500' and 10,000'. About 8 minutes before radar contact is lost, the aircraft enters a fairly constant 500' +/- per minute descent. Speed increases up to about 150 kts. Certainly not a speed one would pitch for to obtain best glide (in the event of an engine out) I wouldn't think. Based on the conditions I saw in the area at the time and this data, it feels like he might have descended through a layer, probing, trying to find the bottoms. It would be interesting to hear the conversation that ATC was having with them at the time. At the end of the day though, we'll have to see what the NTSB determines. Their first report should be fairly telling.

1977 Piper PA32R-300 Lance