

Hicks Ralph

From: Dustan McCoy <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Friday, October 6, 2017 3:11 PM
To: Hicks Ralph
Subject: October 6, 2017 11:45 am

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Samuels Field, Bardstown, KY

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Retired

On October 5, 2017 I arrived at Samuels Field at about 5:30 pm to fly my plane which is hangered at Hanger A at Samuels Field. The Field had been closed for a good part of the day for a painting project and when I arrived several vehicles were still on the ramp finishing up the project. I walked through the lobby and upon exiting the lobby I noticed a bright yellow plane tail dragger in front of Hanger B. I walked to the plane at first thinking it was an old Cub. A man was sitting in the rear seat of the plane and woman was standing in front of the right wing strut. I introduced myself and commented on the nice plane. He introduced himself as David Hall and the woman introduced herself as Sharon Hall. We talked for nearly 30 minutes as he was waiting for the vehicles to clear the ramp.

Without attempting to trace the exact flow of our conversation, the following are the portions of our conversation that I recall:

- David was 68 years of age and his father had been a long time pilot and had managed Samuels Field at some point. His father had "burned out" of flying but David was still excited to fly
- His plane was a homebuilt and he said this would be his first flight in the plane after working on it for an extended period of time. My impression was that he had not built the plane originally, but had restored the plane.
- The plane had a Volkswagen 80 hp engine. We talked about fuel contamination in planes, laughing that only guys our age worried about that now. I told him the FBO sumped the tanks daily and I trusted the 100LL at Samuels.
- He spoke about mechanical problems one could have flying, but noted they were out of the control of the pilot.
- We discussed my plane (a Carbon Cub) and its performance.
- He seemed concerned that I might be in the pattern as he was flying the pattern as he did not have radio.
- I assured him that I would depart the pattern immediately and go out to the east and do landings in a couple of grass areas on my farm. We discussed meeting today (October 6) and he would follow me in his plane and do some grass strip landings. He noted his tires were larger than normal, but he also said they were not very good.
- He noted that he had to fly the plane from the rear seat. He was tall and it did appear he likely did not have sufficient leg room to fly from the front seat.
- We talked about parachute systems on planes and discussed they were likely not helpful on his plane or mine due to their low stall speeds. He noted his plane would stall at about 35 miles per hour.
- We traded phone numbers so that we could speak about flying today.

- He asked if would like to join him on this flight from the front seat and I declined. My impression was that he had not flown in a while and wanted someone with experience in a like plane to be with him on this flight.

After speaking with David and his wife, I walked to Hanger A and pushed my plane just outside the hanger, with the plane facing SW generally parallel to runway 21. I stood by plane and watched David takeoff on runway 03 and fly a typical left hand pattern. His first approach appeared normal, but as he began to flare he appeared to be over controlling the plane. He ended up with his left wing low and quite nose high and applied what sounded like full power. His plane recovered quickly and he leveled the plane easily and moved back over the center line. He then again flew a normal left hand pattern for 03, except that at the midpoint of the downwind leg a plane taxied on to 03 for departure. He turned 90 degrees right to the downwind leg for about 30 seconds and then turned left to pick up the downwind heading.

At this point I went into the men's room at the FBO. When I left the men's room and departed the lobby of the FBO and walked to the front of my plane, I noticed he was about 2/3 down runway 03 and climbing on runway heading. On this departure as he crossed over the approximate end of runway 03, I noticed he was not climbing the rate of the previous two departures. Shortly beyond the end of runway 03, the right wing dropped and the plane appeared to go straight down at a high rate of speed with the nose generally pointing east. The plane quickly disappeared from my view as there were trees between my location and plane. Within a very short time the plane reappeared nose slightly up and pointing generally north before it disappeared behind the trees for a second time.

I walked quickly to the grass between the ramp and the taxiway and looked down the runway and could see nothing. At this point Mrs Hall, who had been standing in front of Hanger B, was walking toward me and asked what I thought since she could no longer hear engine noise. I told her we should jump in my car and drive to the end of the runway as soon as possible. As we were heading toward Hanger A to go through to the hanger and get my car, Cory Johnson, the FBO manager, was coming out of Hanger A and we climbed into a vehicle located in Hanger A and drove down the taxiway paralleling runway 03. At the end of the taxiway as we were turning west to cross the runway, we could see the plane sitting vertically in the field, nose down, and generally pointing to east.

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