

Gretz Robert

From: Gretz Robert
Sent: Friday, September 14, 2018 8:49 AM
To: Gretz Robert
Subject: FW: Interview with Pilot - N291CP - Important

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 25, 2018 10:02 AM
To: Gretz Robert [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Interview with Pilot - N291CP - Important

Bob,

I have a few more items I'd like to discuss with Mr. Sheffer anyway, so I will make a note of the autopilot and whether he used it on the flight to Geneseo.

Update on a few things:

1. Jim Seymour and I went down to look at the wreckage late last week. We noted some curling on the elevator and some grass on the underside of the empennage between the horizontal stab and the elevator, along with the tail tie down. I am reviewing pictures mailed to me by the Sherriff's dept. to see if this may have been damage during or after the accident. I'm still waiting on witness statements.
2. I interviewed both Cadets. It should be noted that this was their first flight aboard a CAP aircraft and neither of them are pilots. Also, both Cadets suffered concussions and their parents have noted problems with their memory.
 - a. The first Cadet (Lentz) did not recall Mr. Sheffer doing a preflight, or doing a checklist or any types of checks or a run-up after taxi and before takeoff.
 - b. He noted that Mr. Sheffer had trouble getting the engine to start. [REDACTED]
 - c. He recalled a short hesitation at the end of the runway along with a radio call (probably to the air boss) immediately before beginning the takeoff roll.
 - d. I asked if he remembered Mr. Sheffer moving the control yoke or doing any checks before takeoff, and he said no.
 - e. He remembered breaking ground and a short time airborne before the aircraft began to pitch up abruptly.
 - f. After the nose dropped, and the left wing dropped, he said that Mr. Sheffer started to "Pull up" but not in time.
 - g. He felt the airplane start to level right before impacting nose first, and then flipped upside down.
 - h. Immediately after the crash, he remembered exiting the aircraft and moving to a place behind the tail of the aircraft as they had been briefed in the emergency briefing.
 - i. The Second Cadet (Jones) DID recall Mr. Sheffer doing an "abbreviated preflight" in his words. I asked if he remembered Mr. Sheffer moving the control surfaces and he did not recall him doing that.
 - j. He did remember Mr. Sheffer running a checklist immediately before and after engine start. He also remembered the difficulty starting the engine.

- k. I asked if he remembered stopping at the end of the runway to do any checklists, or if he heard changes in engine sounds (run-up) or manipulating the control yoke, and he said no, but he did remember the flaps moving.
 - l. He told me that immediately after takeoff, the nose went up higher than he thought it should, and Mr. Sheffer saying, "No, No, No", followed by the nose dropping.
 - m. He was not sure what part of the airplane impacted the ground first.
3. Jim Seymour and I interviewed Major Sheffer. We arrived at the hospital on the Monday after the accident, but he had just been moved out of the ICU and told us that he did not feel up to being interviewed. We re-scheduled for Thursday the 19th at his home. It should be noted that Mr. Sheffer was on Oxycodone during his interview, but was very aware and did not seem to have difficulty recalling memory. He was also able to use his iPad easily while we were there and pulled up his weight and balance for us on Fore-flight. During our interview with him, he gave almost exactly the same story as he did to you.
- a. Mr. Sheffer told me that a CAP Instructor, Martha-Ann Pickard, reviewed his Weight and Balance with him prior to meeting up with the Cadets.
 - b. He did tell me that he used 20 degrees of flaps (C-182 POH calls for flaps 20 for soft field takeoff). Pictures of the flap handle show both the flap lever and position indicator to be less than 10. [REDACTED]
 - c. He stated that he stopped at the end of the runway, ran the checklist and did a full run-up. Neither of the Cadets remembered him doing that.
 - d. After rotation, he said he leveled off in ground affect for a short time to allow the aircraft to build speed (per soft-field technique), but as it accelerated it started to pitch up. [REDACTED]
 - e. He used the electric elevator trim to trim nose down along with pushing hard on the yoke. The report we got from your Cessna contact showed that the trim was nose down after the crash. Unfortunately we have no way of knowing how far the trim traveled.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Martha-Ann is the wife of one of our inspectors. I called her and did a brief phone interview to see if I could get a feel for what kind of pilot Mr. Sheffer is, and to confirm she saw the weight and balance. She said she did review it with him, and that's when they decided to go with only two Cadets instead of 3 as the weight was a little too close to max. I asked her if she had ever flown with Mr. Sheffer and she told me no, but that he had a very good reputation of being very thorough.

- She did tell me something that caught my attention though. She said that they were in a rush to get everything done due to the air show schedule.

I will call the air boss and see if he saw anything.

Anything else you would like me to ask, please let me know.

Robert M Cunningham

Aviation Safety Inspector
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