

From: [REDACTED]
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Fwd: N26889 Accident
Date: Wednesday, May 26, 2021 8:35:43 PM
Attachments: [vasile phone call screenshot.png](#)

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From: Jeff W [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, May 26, 2021 3:01 PM
To: Patterson, Joseph M (FAA)
Subject: Re: N26889 Accident

Hello Mr. Patterson,

Thank you for all your efforts concerning the accident, the following describes the event on 5/26/2021 concerning Vasile Ghelan's accident to the best of my memory.

Vasile was in good spirits like always before the flight, we had discussed that the flight was to begin at Downtown Island Airport, with a landing at Crossville airport. From there, he was supposed to go to Cleveland TN, and then head back to Downtown Island Airport. The weather was VFR conditions that day, and the airplane had plenty of fuel on board to make the flight. He was to contact Knoxville approach on 123.9 and pick up flight following like we had always done in training.

I received a phone call at 8:26 am that day from Vasile (please see attached screenshot). I answered the phone call and this is the conversation that followed (to the best of my memory/knowledge)

Me: Hey Vas, how are you doing buddy

Vas: Hey Jeff, it feels like the engine is not getting power, its only getting 1,700-1800 RPM and I am going 75 knots

Me: Ok, have you checked the fuel tanks, make sure both magnetos are on, what about the carb heat?

Vas: Yes, I checked all that. The engine instruments are in the green, its not making full power and I can not climb.

Me: Where are you at, what is the closest airport to you? You need to look for the closest airport and land.

Vas: I think I am 40-50 miles away from Crossville, I don't think I can make it back to Downtown Island from where I'm at.

Me: You need to land at the closest airport immediately, I can come pick you up.

Vas: I am only going 70 knots now, its not getting power.

Me: You need to make an emergency landing, is there an open field to land?

Vas: I can't clear these mountains, I'm coming up on trees.

Me: You're ok buddy, is there any open area near by? Are you talking to Air Traffic Control

right now?

Vas: No I am not. This plane is going down.

Up to that point, Vasile was calm, cool, and collected. I do remember him screaming at the end of the phone call and it sounded like he had either hit trees or had a hard landing, and the phone line went blank after a couple of seconds.

This is how the conversation went to the best of my memory as I mentioned before, I was in a state of shock myself. I did call 9-1-1 immediately after the initial phone call with Vasile, along with Mcghee Tyson Air Traffic Control. I am not sure if there is a way for you to trace the call or not, but it could be helpful to listen to the entire phone call between us.

Please let me know if I can be of further assistance, and thank you again for your hard work.

Jeffrey Weissert

On Wed, May 26, 2021 at 11:53 AM Patterson, Joseph M (FAA)

 wrote:

Jeff,

When able, send me a detailed description of the phone conversation and any events leading up to it. Pre-flight, morning actions or thoughts that stand out mentioned by the pilot. Also send the screenshot of his call with the date and time.