

Inspector Statement

Subject: Interview with Donnell Vigil

By: FAA Aviation Safety Inspector Dwight Greenlund

On 6/19/2021 at approximately 11:00 am I interviewed Ms. Donnell Vigil regarding the accident of aircraft N1300Q on 6/18/2021. Ms. Vigil is the owner of A-Cent Aviation, a flight school with a main base located at Hurlong Field Florida. The Hurlong location is certified under 14 CFR §141 for student pilot training. The accident aircraft was operated out of the Fernandina Beach Florida location which is under 14 CFR §61, non-certified. The interview took place at her office at Hurlong Field.

I asked Mr. Vigil how long she had owned aircraft N1300Q. She stated that she purchased the aircraft in December 2020 from Pinnacle Aviation in Alabama. The aircraft had a new (overhauled) engine, propeller, and avionics installed when she purchased the aircraft. She said Pinnacle had purchased the aircraft, completed the maintenance work, and then resold the aircraft to her. Before Pinnacle purchased the aircraft she did not know where it had been, but was told it had been hangered. She said pilots from her school picked up the aircraft in Foley Alabama and brought the aircraft back to Hurlong Field. The aircraft was inspected, and then used for student training at Hurlong Field. When she was looking at opening a facility at Fernandina Beach Airport, she decided to use N1300Q as it was one of her best aircraft and would attract potential customers. She said the aircraft moved to Fernandina Beach around the first of May.

I asked how long she had known the pilot Mr. David Cuttino. She stated that she had known Mr. Cuttino for many years. She knew that he was an instructor at Sunrise Aviation, located at Cecil Field just a few miles away. She said that Mr. Cuttino offered that if she ever opened a school at Fernandina Beach that he would instruct for her. She said that around the beginning of May when she opened the facility at Fernandina Beach, Mr. Cuttino started to instruct for her. Ms. Vigil inferred that Mr. Cuttino had some medical procedures completed on his hip and legs, but was ready to fly and instruct for her in May. When I asked, Ms. Vigil did not convey any concerns with the abilities of Mr. Cuttino.

I asked how long she had known the student pilot Ms. Alexis George. She stated that she did not know her well. She had heard that she had flown at a high school pilot outreach program the last year. She had started flying with A-Cent in June and had flown with the school a few times.

I asked Ms. Vigil to walk me through the late morning of June 18. She said she received a call notifying her that an aircraft had crashed in the St. Marys River. She said she received the location and departed for the scene. She said she called FAA Inspector Joe Gramzinski to tell him of the accident. When I asked if she knew what specific maneuvers the crew may have been doing, she said she did not know. She mentioned that Jack Bishop was on site at the Fernandina Beach facility and saw the crew that morning as they were preparing to take off.

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