



MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

Brian C. Rayner
Senior Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region

Date: October 27, 2021
Person: James L. Vestal – Pilot/Owner
NTSB Accident Number: ERA21LA370 Walnut Cove, NC
Subject: Piper PA-22 N9639D

Narrative:

Mr. Vestal was the pilot/owner of the accident airplane. He provided a written statement which was excerpted from an FAA report and attached below.

ON SEPTEMBER 17TH AT MY REQUEST MR. MIKE STEELE DELIVERED MY TRI PACER N9639D TO CAUSEY AVIATION IN LIBERTY, NORTH CAROLINA. THE REASON FOR THE MOVE WAS CAUSEY HAS A PAVED RUNWAY, WHICH IS MUCH NICER THAN A GRASS RUNWAY.

SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 19TH AROUND 4 PM I DECIDED TO TAKE A TEST FLIGHT. AFTER ABOUT AN HOUR OF FLIGHT I WAS READY TO RETURN TO BASE AND I REALIZED I WAS LOST. ALL THE FIELDS LOOKED ALIKE. I FLEW IN CIRCLES AROUND AND AROUND FOR ABOUT AN HOUR LOOKING FOR LANDMARKS. I HAD NO RADIO AS MR STEELE HAD DISCONNECTED ALL RADIOS WITHOUT ME REALIZING IT. FINALLY I SAW THE SMOKESTACKS AT BELEWS CREEK. I KNEW THE STACKS AFTER ABOUT 3 YEARS OF FLYING AROUND THEM. I DECIDED TO PROCEED TO MR STEELES AIRSTRIP AND LAND.

JUST AS I WAS PREPARING TO LAND AT MR STEELES. I SAW THE PAVED STRIP AT WALNUT COVE. THIS WAS A BEAUTIFUL PAVED STRIP AND I MADE AN INSTANT DECISION TO LAND THERE. I LANDED IN THE FIRST ONE THIRD OF THE PAVED STRIP. WHEN I APPLIED THE BRAKES THEY SLOWED ME DOWN BUT DID NOT STOP THE PLANE. I WENT THROUGH THE FENCE AND DAMAGE TO THE PLANE WAS A TOTAL LOSS.