



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Timothy W. Monville
Sr. Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region

Date: October 27, 2021
Person Contacted: Alexander Munoz
NTSB Accident Number: ERA21LA383

Narrative:

Federal Aviation Administration inspector Alexander Munoz was contacted by phone on September 28, 2021 at 1058 EDT. He was called at [REDACTED]

He indicated that he was on-scene late last night and noted the left fuel tank had some fuel remaining while the right fuel tank was empty. Examination of the accident site revealed evidence of a low angle impact, low engine rpm. The propeller did sustain some scratches, and the engine crankcase was cracked.

He noted there were 3 points of impact. The airplane first clipped a palm tree, then impacted a light pole.

There were 2 persons-on-board. Both were transported to Memorial Regional West hospital for treatment of their injuries.

The airplane was operated by a flight school and was on a night cross country flight.

When first responders arrived, they cut the wreckage to rescue the occupants.

The wreckage will be taken to Fort Pierce, Florida.

The digest was reviewed with him during the call and he agreed with the content.



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Date: October 27, 2021
Person Contacted: Alexander Munoz
NTSB Accident Number: ERA21LA383

Narrative:

Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) inspector Alexander Munoz contacted NTSB by phone on September 28, 2021, at 1350 EDT. He called from [REDACTED]

He called from the accident site and indicated that it was not safe to apply aircraft power to electrically check the fuel quantity indicating system. The fuel selector was found between the right tank and both position (figure1).



Figure 1: FAA Digital photograph. View depicting the fuel selector valve.

The call end time was not recorded.

The digest was reviewed with him during the phone call and he agreed with the content.



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Date: October 27, 2021
Person Contacted: Alexander Munoz
NTSB Accident Number: ERA21LA383

Narrative:

Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) inspector Alexander Munoz contacted NTSB by phone on October 1, 2021 at 1030 EDT. He called from [REDACTED]

He provided the following contact information for the flight instructor and student:

Urmila Ravi Shankar (flight instructor)
Phone: [REDACTED]

Gopika Sreekumar
Certificate Number – [REDACTED]
Phone: [REDACTED]

He indicated that 2.5 gallons of fuel were drained from the left fuel tank (Figures 1 and 2) which was not breached. The right fuel tank which also was not breached was empty of fuel. The fuel selector was found between the both and right tank positions. The gascolator or fuel strainer was empty, and he could not access the carburetor bowl.

The engine was removed from the airframe for recovery. During the process only drops of fuel were noted from the fuel line from the fuel strainer to the carburetor.

With respect to the accident site, he indicated that while descending, the left wing of the airplane clipped palm trees about 50 feet above ground level (agl) located in the median of Palm Avenue. The location of the palm trees was determined in Google Earth to be 25.983668° north latitude and -080.278911° West longitude. The airplane then yawed to the left, impacted on Palm Avenue, impacted a stop sign located approximately 80 to 100 feet from the first impacted tree, then impacted a tree head-on. The airplane then veered to the right and came to rest against a

light pole (Figure 3). The resting position of the wreckage was located at 25.982483° north latitude and -080.278637° West longitude. The airplane came to rest heading in a northerly direction adjacent to the northbound lanes of Palm Avenue. He measured a distance of 20'6" from the impacted oak tree to the resting position of the airplane.

It was apparent that the flight instructor was attempting to land in a southerly direction on the southbound lanes of Palm Avenue.

We provided witness information as:

Sabren Sybron

[REDACTED]

Miramar Florida

Phone: [REDACTED]



Figure 1: FAA Digital Photograph. View During Draining of the Fuel From the Left Fuel Tank.



Figure 2: FAA Digital Photograph. View of the Fuel Drained from the Non-Breached Left Fuel Tank.



Figure 3: FAA Digital Photograph. Right side view of the Wreckage at the Accident Site. Note the Displaced Empennage.

The call end time was not recorded.

The digest was reviewed with him during the phone call and he agreed with the content.



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Eastern Region

Date: October 27, 2021
Person Contacted: Gopika Sreekumar
NTSB Accident Number: ERA21LA383

Narrative:

Ms. Gopika Sreekumar was contacted NTSB by phone on October 21, 2021, at 1100 EDT. She called from [REDACTED] which is her cell phone. She provided an e-mail address of [REDACTED]

At the beginning of the interview she was advised that the NTSB is a federal agency mandated by Congress to investigate aircraft accidents, and NTSB has no authority to take any action against any individual. She was also informed that the purpose of an NTSB investigation is for safety only, and any person NTSB talks with has the right to representation; she agreed to the interview without representation.

Her date of birth was [REDACTED]. She holds a student pilot certificate, certificate number [REDACTED] issued May 1, 2021. She was issued a 1st class medical certificate with no limitations on March 11, 2020. She has 81.6 hours total time (including simulator time) with 2 different flight instructors at 2 different flight schools. She had accrued 41.8 hours flying with the CFI who was in the airplane with her. The other flight school was called Wayman Aviation, which she began flying March 24, 2021. She left Wayman Aviation because of personal comfort. She transferred to Jacobs Flight Services LLC, because she and the owner of that flight school are from India. She added there was nothing wrong with the training at Wayman Aviation. Her first flight with Jacobs Flight Services LLC was on July 15, 2021.

She was asked the following questions –

How many flights had you made that day?

She flew earlier in the day to practice landings. Then she flew on the accident flight from North Perry Airport (HWO) to Naples Municipal Airport (APF), Naples, Florida, for her night

requirement. The flight earlier that day was conducted in the accident airplane (N4118L) at 1130 EDT, and she flew a total of 2.2 hours dual with her flight instructor (Urmila Ravi Shankar) in the traffic pattern at HWO. There were no problems with the airplane or engine during that flight.

Explain in detail the accident flight?

She needed to complete the nighttime requirement for her upcoming private pilot checkride consisting of 10 takeoffs and landings. She performed a preflight inspection of the airplane as she had been taught while her flight instructor was in her car. Her preflight inspection included a check of the engine oil which was 1 quart low. She added 1 quart of oil. Also as part of her preflight inspection she visually examined each fuel tank and she could see the fuel but could not touch it with her fingers extended into the tank inlet opening. As she was completing her preflight inspection her flight instructor arrived and asked her if the airplane was ok. She had checked the tachometer and noted that the airplane had been flown 1.2 hours since the fuel tanks had been filled and she informed her flight instructor that the fuel level was a "little less" than full. As part of her preflight the flight instructor checked the oil quantity but not the fuel tanks. After the preflight inspection was completed by her flight instructor, she said they were good to go. The engine was started they taxied to the active runway and departed flying to APF where she performed 11 touch-and-go landings. The flight departed APF to return to HWO, and she does not recall any part of the descent or landing. She regained consciousness in the hospital.

At HWO what were the fuel gauges reading?

She did not recall.

At HWO explain how you could see but not touch the fuel level in each fuel tank?

She removed each fuel cap and could see fuel, but could not touch it. Neither fuel tank was full.

Does that airplane have a fuel dipstick?

No.

Have you ever used a fuel dipstick?

No.

Explain the flight from HWO to APF?

After departure the flight climbed to between 2,000 and 2,500 ft mean sea level, at 2,100 to 2,200 rpm, the mixture control full rich, and the fuel selector on both. She added that when she flew solo, it was a requirement to have full fuel tanks, but in this case the fuel tanks were not full.

Explain the type of landings at APF?

All 11 landings were touch-and-go type. She performed short field, soft field, normal, and also did a short approach.

Explain the flight from APF to HWO?

It was flown between 2,000 and 2,500 ft mean sea level, at 2,100 to 2,200 rpm, the mixture control full rich, and the fuel selector on both.

What was the last thing that she recalled?

They departed APF and were in cruise flight. The last thing she remembered was when they were 25 to 30 minutes from APF in cruise flight.

When did you regain consciousness?

When in the hospital

Do you know the date and time?

It was the 28th. She was not sure of the time of day, but it was possibly at midnight. She was told that she asked for help while in the airplane.

What seat were you in?

Left seat.

Were you wearing a seatbelt and shoulder harness?

Yes.

Were they loose, snug, tight?

Perfect.

Were you taking video during the accident flight?

No. She did take a picture with her phone during cruise flight. Her cell phone is OK but the memory card was lost.

Explain your injuries?

She fractured her right radius and ulna. Her right wrist was fractured. Both femur bones were fractured. Both lower bones in her right leg were fractured. She sustained scratches and bruises. She did not sustain any head injuries.

How many surgeries did you have?

Four.

She indicated that she plans to return to India.

She was asked to provide copies of every page of her pilot logbook before leaving the country. She provided pictures of every page of her logbook the same day.

Was there any problem with the airplane or engine during the flights that day?

No, not to her knowledge, though she did not recall the later portion of the accident flight.

Do you recall the fuel gauge readings or any concern of the fuel gauge readings by your flight instructor during the flight?

No I hadn't. She was not sure if her flight instructor had any concern but there was no conversation between her and her flight instructor about the fuel gauges or fuel level.

Where are the fuel gauges located?
In front of the right seat.

Do you have any questions for me?
No, nothing.

The call ended at 1137 EDT.

The digest was e-mailed to her for review on October 29, 2021. She replied on October 29, 2021, at 1732 EDT with corrections that were incorporated into the narrative. The corrected digest was e-mailed to her on October 29, 2021.



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Timothy W. Monville
Sr. Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region

Date: November 1, 2021
Person Contacted: Urmila Ravi Shankar
NTSB Accident Number: ERA21LA383

Narrative:

Ms. Urmila Ravi Shankar contacted NTSB by phone on October 22, 2021, at 1330 EDT. The call was made from her hospital phone of [REDACTED]. She provided a cell phone number of [REDACTED] and an e-mail address of [REDACTED].

At the beginning of the interview she was advised that the NTSB is a federal agency mandated by Congress to investigate aircraft accidents, and NTSB has no authority to take any action against any individual. She was also informed that the purpose of an NTSB investigation is for safety only, and any person NTSB talks with has the right to representation; she agreed to the interview without representation.

It was noted that she was talking in a low or hushed voice.

She was asked if she was medicated?

Not really. Her pain was reduced. She was getting physical therapy (PT) to help her walk.

She was asked about being in the United States?

She was on a student VISA for Jacobs Flight Services to build her flight time. She checked her logbook for the review and reported she has not passed 1,000 total flight hours. She added that she did not recall the exact figures but reported, "it's closer to 1,000 [hours] flight time." She got her Federal Aviation Administration flight instructor certificates for airplane single engine, airplane multi-engine, and instrument airplane ratings at Jacobs Flight Services.

With respect to the accident flight, her student needed 10 nighttime takeoffs and landings to finish the requirements for her private pilot certificate. She arrived at the North Perry Airport (HWO), Pembroke Pines, Florida and opened the door to the facility and got a quart of oil for the student who performed the preflight inspection of the airplane. She (Urmila) checked the fuel

tank on her side of the airplane (right side) and added, "I think mistake I did," The student checked the fuel tank on her side of the airplane. She (flight instructor) checked the main landing gear tires for bald spots, then after engine start taxied and departed HWO en route to Naples Municipal Airport (APF), Naples, Florida. The flight followed I-75 and when at APF, they did 11 stop-and-go landings instead of the 10 that were required. She had been taught to do more than what was required so that is what she taught. After the last stop-and-go landing the flight departed APF and again followed I-75 en-route to HWO. When the flight was 3 miles from there, she felt that something was wrong because the fuel gauges were not moving. She moved the fuel selector to determine if the fuel gauges would change the reading based on the selector position, but she thought the, "fuel was less" then depicted. She informed the student that they would be performing an emergency landing in a street with lights. She selected 7700 on the transponder and maintained best glide airspeed for the impending forced landing.

What occurred during the landing?

The airplane impacted a tree. After touchdown on the road she turned to avoid traffic and impacted another tree.

You mentioned the word mistake in the beginning of the conversation please explain?

Her student informed her that the left fuel tank was full as part of the preflight inspection but she (flight instructor) did not think it was full based on the outcome of the accident flight. Her side (right) was full of fuel when she checked it as part of her preflight inspection. Because she thought the airplane had full fuel tanks, she thought there was four hours of endurance. Her calculated flight time maximum was 3.5 hours, which gave 30 minutes additional flight time. Because of this information, she did not feel it necessary to top the fuel tanks at APF. She added that if she had known the left side fuel tank was not full at HWO, she would have topped the fuel tanks off at APF.

How does she verify the fuel level on her side?

She climbed onto the wing lift strut and visually inspected the fuel tank. She put her finger in the opening and reported the fuel was to the top of the opening.

Did you use a fuel dipstick to check the right fuel tank?

No, she checked it visually and by feel. She knew it was topped off.

Did you know the airplane had been flown after fueling and before your accident flight?

There had been one flight prior to their flight, but she did not know how many hours the previous flight had been.

Did you think your airplane had been fueled after the previous flight?

Yes, she checked the right fuel tank and it was full. She should have checked the left fuel tank.

What time did you depart HWO?

1930.

NTSB Questions Continued:

What time did you arrive at APF?

Between 2020 and 2030. She knew the control tower at APF closed at 2200 so to get in the 10 or 11 stop-and-go landings they needed to arrive at or before 2030.

Explain in detail the flight from HWO to APF?

After departure from HWO they climbed to 2,500 ft msl and proceeded via I75. When the flight was about 15 nautical miles from APF, they descended to 2,000 ft and continued. When the flight was 10 nautical miles from APF they contacted the air traffic control tower who instructed them to enter a right downwind for runway five. She confirmed all the landings they did were stop-and-go. They departed APF at about 2210, the mixture full rich, and the RPMs set between 2,100 and 2,200, and the fuel selector on the both position where it had remained since original takeoff from HWO. When the flight was approximately 3 miles from HWO, she moved the fuel selector to the left tank first but noted the left fuel quantity needle was "not moving." She then moved the fuel selector to the right tank position and also noted the right fuel quantity needle was "not moving."

Did the engine lose power?

It was not making any sound, and she thought the propeller was adding drag.

Did you feel that the engine was not producing power?

Yes, I could feel that the engine was not producing power.

What were the fuel gauges reading when you noted they were not moving?

They were stuck in the same position, a little less than one half. She added that on the flight to Naples the fuel gauges were reading satisfactory. On the return flight to HWO, the fuel gauge needles were stuck a little less than one half capacity.

Were either fuel gauge needle near empty?

She described both being a little less than half full, adding that they were somewhere between one half and empty. They were stuck there and had not moved which is what she noticed when the flight was 3 miles from HWO.

What was the power setting and the altitude on the return flight to HWO?

They followed I75 and flew at 2,000 ft msl. She noted a trailer park which was a checkpoint on a 5 mile final for the runway at HWO, and felt something was wrong. At that time the mixture control was full rich.

Explain the restraint she was wearing?

She was wearing a seatbelt not the shoulder harness. It was her mistake not to wear the shoulder harness.

Did the lack of you wearing the shoulder harness contribute to your injury?

Yes, she felt it did.

Did you have a flight plan filed or VFR flight following for the flight?
No. There was no flight following. They were following the roads.

What are your injuries?

She sustained a broken left leg, and sustained injuries to her face including her eye socket that required surgeries. She was in the intensive care unit for 10 to 15 days, and while hospitalized she sustained several mini strokes. Her left eye was also injured. She added that she was glad that no one was injured on the ground, and reported the forced landing was a challenge for her.

Are you staying in the United States?

While she is undergoing rehabilitation, which were parents are helping with. At the present time she is not able to bend her left leg.

When you moved the fuel selector did that restore engine power?

No, it didn't. The minute she felt that the engine was not producing power is when she knew something was wrong.

Are there any procedures with the operator to fuel the aircraft before flight?

Whoever finishes a flight is required to fuel the aircraft; however, it is not possible to fuel the aircraft at night. Therefore, the airplane would have to be fueled in the morning.

Are there any procedures with the operator to use a fuel dipstick to check the fuel tanks?

As part of her training, she had been taught to use a fuel dipstick, but that day they did not use it.

How many flights had you made with that student?

She probably had flown with her between 20 and 25 hours. The student had finished all the cross-country requirements but needed nighttime takeoffs and landings for her upcoming private pilot checkride, which was scheduled the first week of October.

What do you think happened?

The first mistake I made was trusting the student, who said the left fuel tank was full. She (flight instructor) should have checked the fuel tank on the left side of the aircraft herself.

Do you have any questions for NTSB?

No.

The call ended at 1409 EDT.

The digest was e-mailed to her for review on November 1, 2021. She replied on November 3, 2021, at 0837 EDT with comments that were incorporated into the narrative. The corrected digest was e-mailed to her on November 5, 2021.



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Timothy W. Monville
Sr. Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region

Date: October 27, 2021
Person Contacted: Gopika Sreekumar
NTSB Accident Number: ERA21LA383

Narrative:

Ms. Gopika Sreekumar was contacted by phone on October 22, 2021, at 1457 EDT. She was called at [REDACTED] which is her cell phone.

She was asked the following questions –

Did you check both fuel tanks?
Yes.

Explain the fuel level in the fuel tanks?
Both sides were less than full.

Did you tell the flight instructor about the fuel level in each fuel tank?
Yes. She told her the fuel level in each tank was less than full.

Did the flight instructor check the fuel tanks?
No, neither.

The call end time was not recorded.

The digest was e-mailed to her for review on October 29, 2021. She replied the same day at 1752 EDT with, "Dear sir Thank you for the mail. No changes required." The corrected digest was e-mailed to her on October 29, 2021.