

Timothy W. Monville
Sr. Air Safety Investigator
Office of Aviation Safety - Eastern Region

Date: February 10, 2025
Subject: ERA25LA111, Record of Conversation/Interview
Contact: Kurt W. Paulus

Mr. Paulus was contacted by phone on February 10, 2025, at 1000 EST. He was contacted by Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) inspector Schluep. Mr. Paulus provided a home phone number of [REDACTED] and an e-mail address of [REDACTED] NTSB Investigator Monville was also on the call.

At the beginning of the interview Mr. Paulus 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. He 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; he agreed to the interview without representation.

At this stage of the conversation FAA inspector Schluep discussed with Mr. Paulus the Pilot's Bill of Rights (PBR), and Mr. Paulus agreed to allow Mr. Schluep to be present.

Mr. Paulus was advised by e-mail when sending this document for review that it will not be released to the public until the investigation is finished and when published, any personal identifiable information (PII) such as cell phone number, e-mail address, address, pilot certificate number, etc., will be redacted and not viewable in the released document.

Mr. Paulus provided a home address of [REDACTED] Delaware, Ohio [REDACTED] He indicated that he has about 1,500 hours total flight time and estimated about 500 hours in make and model¹.

¹ The FAA IIC has the pilot logbook.

He was asked the following questions by NTSB –

What was the purpose of the flight?

To fly to Clermont County Airport (I69), in Batavia, Ohio to visit Sporty's Pilot Shop to look at headsets with a friend. After the visit he planned to return to Delaware Municipal Airport – Jim Moore Field (DLZ), Delaware, Ohio.

Do you feel clear headed enough for the interview?

Oh, yeah, absolutely. "I feel good."

What was the time and type of medication last taken?

Tylenol over the counter (OTC) 650 mg taken at 0700 hours February 10, 2025.

Explain in detail the accident flight including any preflight weather briefing?

The flight started at DLZ, at about 1330 EST². He had an instrument flight rules flight plan filed for the intended flight to I69. He planned to fly at 4,000 ft mean sea level (msl). He obtained a preflight weather briefing from Foreflight which reported the ceiling was 4,000 ft overcast. He executed an instrument approach into I69 and landed uneventfully³. Based on the preflight weather briefing the rain was not reported to move in until after 1600 EST. That gave him more than enough time to look at the headsets and depart for the estimated 30 to 40 minutes long return flight.

Before departure from I69 it began raining. After departure under visual flight rules he began heading towards Columbus, Ohio and noted instrument flight rules (IFR) conditions. He checked the ADS-B weather and noted the conditions were clear to the east. He then proceeded in an easterly direction and entered a rain shower while flying in VFR conditions. The airplane at that time was in freezing rain and picking up ice. He turned on the pitot heat and TKS (weeping wing) systems but continued flying in the same freezing rain conditions resulting in more ice accretion. He knew that he needed to land as he had previously experienced freezing rain while flying another airplane. He identified the Ed Newlon Field Airport (I86), New Lexington, Ohio and proceeded there. The windshield was iced up as he flew over I86 and the flight entered a normal airport traffic pattern for landing on runway 8. He added that it was very hard to see, and the airplane impacted short of the intended runway.

What was the date and time you received the preflight weather briefing?

Before departure from DLZ he obtained a standard weather briefing from ForeFlight. After landing at I69 he did not get a full weather briefing; rather, he obtained an abbreviated weather briefing. During that briefing he obtained METARS and looked at weather radar noting a small rain showers. With respect to the accident flight while flying VFR he noted adverse weather along his

² According to ADS-B data, at 1341 the airplane was about 3,000 ft down runway 10 at DLZ during the takeoff roll.

³ According to ADS-B data, at 1432 the airplane was about 1,170 ft southwest from the runway 4 displaced threshold at I69.

route of flight and that is why he turned to the east, staying low. The flight encountered freezing rain which he got through and the flight continued, but the flight again encountered freezing rain. He then elected to divert to I86.

NTSB Questions Continued –

Did he ask FAA air traffic control for help?

I did not, but I was listening to Cincinnati Departure and heard airlines reporting ice at 5,000 ft.

What was the outside air temperature (OAT) at the altitude you were flying at?

It varied between 28°F and as high as the low 30's. The storm or system was moving west to east.

What was the amount of icing the airplane was encountering?

It was light at first, then he went through a band, and it got heavier. He then flew out of that area and again encountered light freezing rain. The farther east he flew it became a little bit heavier, and he decided to proceed to either I86 or Zanesville, Ohio.

Do you recall during the standard and abbreviated preflight weather briefings being advised about freezing rain?

They called for freezing rain after 1600 EST. He noted that when listening to Cincinnati Departure the airline pilots were surprised about the freezing rain.

What altitude were you flying when the flight encountered the freezing rain?

3,000 ft msl descending to 2,000 ft msl.

Can you send us what briefing documents you got from Foreflight?

No, they are electronic files, standard Foreflight briefing with ice, TAF's, METARS, Winds, etc. Sometimes it appears that the provided ADS-B cockpit weather (from Sentry device) is not accurate below 2,000 ft.

Was there anything mechanically wrong with the aircraft that caused the landing undershoot?

"Absolutely not." If I had to make the decision again, I would have stayed at I69.

Was there anything mechanically wrong with the engine that caused the landing undershoot?

No, nothing wrong with the engine or TKS system.

Was there a problem with visibility outside the front windshield?

Yes.

Is that why the landing undershoot?

"Yeah, yup."

NTSB Questions Continued –

Explain TKS?

It is called weeping wing and disperses an anti-freeze solution on the leading edges of the wing, and the leading edges of the vertical and horizontal stabilizers. When the flight 1st encountered the freezing rain he flew turned east to avoid and then continued in a northeast direction. He turned on the TKS which had been filled up the day before. He also turned on pitot heat after takeoff. When he turned to the east he turned the TKS to “MAX” and then turned it to “Normal⁴.” The flight then encountered a 2nd band and he left the TKS on “Normal.” He did not use flaps for the accident approach, and kept his speed “up over 90 knots” on approach to I86.

FAA Questions –

Did you turn on the runway end identifier lights (REIL) at I86?

I did not. I saw the beacon, and the approximately 3,500 ft long runway, but wished it would have been wider.

At any time on the final approach did you see the runway?

Yes, when I turned onto final and was high and fast on the approach with the windshield frozen over I could see it out the side of the airplane.

When you touched down did you know you were not on an airport surface?

Absolutely.

You did not turn on the REIL?

No, it was still daylight.

What was your flight time in the last 90 days?

I try to fly at least 1 hour a week. He uses the airplane to commute to a place up north flying much more in the summer.

When was your last flight review?

Just taken by Paul on August 31, 2024.

Did you get the Wings then?

The FAA basic wings program was completed May 24, 2024. He did additional flight training with a Cirrus CSIP about the same time. His recent BasicMed flight physical was completed on Feb. 2, 2025.

Who was the Dr. that gave you Basic Med?

Dr. DeLeon.

⁴ There are 2 settings Normal and High.

FAA Questions Continued –

Your pilot logbook shows about 5 hours in the previous 90 days. Does that sound right?
I will have to check my logbook.

NTSB Questions Continued –

What is CSIP?

It stands for a trained Cirrus Standardized Instructor Pilot who conducts Cirrus safety program and can perform flight reviews that is more intensive than a Biannual Flight Review. His last Cirrus recurrent VFR training from a CSIP instructor was completed on May 19, 2024.

Explain the restraints that you were wearing?

I was wearing the 4-point harness. His airbag deployed. He added that the cabin was built like a roll cage and protected him and the passenger.

What restraint was the passenger wearing?

The 4-point restraint with airbags.

Was the airbag on the lapbelt or shoulder harness?

The shoulder harness straps.

What was the passenger's full name?

Jim Staeck.

What is his contact information?

Phone [REDACTED] and e-mail of [REDACTED]

Is he a pilot?

He is not. He is a friend who was not injured.

Explain your injury?

The airplane came to rest suddenly when it impacted a ditch. His left kneecap impacted the lower portion of the instrument panel, and he sustained a laceration on his right hand. He later reported having knee surgery for "Left knee irrigation and debridement with patella tendon attachment"

He also later advised that he was transported to Zanesville hospital via EMT a little after 4:30 PM last Wednesday Feb 5th, where he underwent surgery there the following afternoon to wash out the knee. He was then transported to Riverside Hospital and arrived Riverside Methodist Hospital at around 11:00 pm at the recommendation of my GP. While there he had another surgery to repair the patella and tendon on Friday Feb 7th around noon. He was released from the hospital February 9, 2025.

NTSB Questions Continued –

Did you have your restraint snug/loose?

It was snug. He added that the lapbelt has a tendency to “ride up” when wearing the shoulder harness.

Do you have any bruising on your hips or waist from the lapbelt?

No. He was on a blood thinner, and they did CT scans.

Did you consider at any point deployment of the Cirrus Airframe Parachute System (CAPS)?

I thought everything was ok including the engine, and so he thought he could reach the runway. He did not have any visibility out of the front windshield. He flew under the 1st band and picked up ice on the airframe and windshield, then he flew to the east to get to an area that was clear but encountered freezing rain again which went from light to heavy. He considered flying to Zanesville but flew over I86 and could see it out the side of the airplane.

Explain the device that you were getting ADS-B weather?

Sentry and his iPad. He knows the weather is 5 minutes plus old when it is displayed. It wasn't showing any weather to the east. He thought he could get around even if he had to fly all the way east to Pittsburgh and then continue.

Explain the airport identifiers?

DLZ>I69>I86.

Where is the airplane based?

DLZ

Any more questions from inspector Schluep?

No, I am good.

Any questions from Mr. Paulus to NTSB?

No, stay out of freezing rain.

The call ended at 1106 EST.

After the phone call ended, he was asked the following follow-up questions with his responses:

1. What altitude did you break out of the clouds and where was the flight at that time?
We never were in IMC. Primarily we were 2000 ft MSL
2. Do you recall the OAT after breaking out of the clouds?

I was never in the clouds. I believe I stated that the OAT was fluctuating between 28 to 34 deg F. It definitely was below 30 when I made the decision to land at 186, Perry Co.

3. Was there any problem with the windshield defroster?
No problem with the defroster...was working for most of the flight but the freezing rain overcame its effectiveness. Had full heat and 3rd stage of fan on.
4. When did you turn it on, what setting, and did you leave it on?
Turned on the defroster when we started picking up the freezing rain, which was towards the beginning of our flight, when we turned eastbound. Full defrost.
5. Were you VFR or IFR when the flight encountered the freezing rain?
"VFR."

The digest was e-mailed to him for review on February 10, 2025. He replied on February 12, 2025 at 1216 EST with comments that were incorporated into the narrative. The amended digest was e-mailed to him for review on February 13, 2025. He replied the same day at 1054 EST, with, "Tim I have reviewed the document. Looks good to me. Thank you Kurt." The FINAL digest was e-mailed to him and the Federal Aviation Administration inspector on February 13, 2025. On the same date at 1342 EST, he replied by e-mail correcting dates. The data was incorporated and sent to him for review the same day. He replied the same day at 1542 EST with comments that were incorporated into the digest. The amended digest was e-mailed to him for final review on February 13, 2025. He replied the same day at 1614 EDT with, "Tim Corrections look in place, Thank you. Kurt." The FINAL digest was e-mailed to him and the FAA inspector on September 30, 2025.