



## RECORD OF CONVERSATION

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**Western Pacific Region**

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**Date: February 9, 2016**  
**Person Contacted: James Metzger (Pilot)**  
**NTSB Accident Number: WPR15LA265**

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### **Narrative:**

During a telephone conversation with Mr. Metzger, he reported that he may have been able to make more sense of what happened on the day of the accident:

He first wanted to mention that he has a total of 18,000 flight hours, 2,000 of which in twin commanders. He has flown every model of aero commander and is very well versed in them. He is also the president of the twin commander flight group, and he often receives calls from people all over the world asking questions about their commanders. In addition, has worked directly with the manufacturer various times. Finally, he is a mechanic and IA. He rebuilt his own aero commander and has worked on countless others. He even provides seminars to show people the specialties/uniqueness of the airplane along with its “quirks”.

The pilot mentioned that he believes there was a failure of the rudder. Before continuing he wanted to describe the rudder system, which is a series of torque tubes. The rudder pedals are connected to a torque tube via rivets. This torque tube is then connected to a bellcrank, which is also secured by rivets. Finally, a torque tube runs from that bellcrank to the tail section where there is a vertical tube. The rivets on the vertical torque tube, as well as the bellcrank, tend to fail because of the abrupt banging caused by tough weather conditions. Since this system is completely stand-alone (and not connected to the nosewheel or anything) it is particularly prone to damage from the wind and harsh conditions. There is a special rudder lock that is supposed to be installed onto the airplane while it is outside, but that is most effective for only short periods of time. It really isn't effective for an airplane that is stored outside and not in a hangar.

The pilot still does not remember what happened, but he believes he was attempting a go around. The airplane shows that the flaps were up, throttle full forward, and the landing gear handle was in the up position.

While his son and he were parting out the wreckage, his son went to grab the pilot side left rudder pedal and pull it back. As he did so, neither the rudder nor the torque tubes moved. Confused, they moved the pedal back and forth multiple times and neither the rudder torque tubes nor the rudder moved. He shifted the pedal to the side and it came completely loose in his hand. They looked at the attachment point and all the rivet heads were still in place, but the rest of the rivet was sheered. Knowing this is a common problem in other areas of the rudder system they thought it was very important to bring this to the NTSB's attention.

It was also noted that the remaining rudder pedals in the cockpit were completely destroyed, however, the rivets were still intact. This particular pedal (left pedal, pilot side) was intact and mostly undamaged with the exception of the rivets being sheered.

END.

Submitted by: Samantha Link