



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Elliott Simpson
Aviation Accident Investigator
Western Pacific Region

Person Contacted: Tom McGregor,
NTSB Accident Number: WPR16FA014

Narrative:

During an in-person conversation on October 19, 2015, Mr. McGregor stated the following:

Mr. McGregor is the chief inspector at Accurate Aviation in Santa Barbara, and the accident pilot Bob Trimble, was the general manager. The passenger, Theresa Day also worked at Accurate in HR and training. She was the fiancé of Mr. McGregor.

The airplane was maintained at Accurate. No personal flight records for Mr. Trimble were available, and presumed to be in the airplane. Mr. McGregor stated that Bob had flown regularly in the airplane, taking multiple trips to Oregon and the Mojave area during the period between receiving his private certificate and the accident. He had experience flying in windy conditions in Mojave. And all his time was in the accident airplane, which he had a complex endorsement for. Bob was the primary pilot in the airplane, he was not IFR rated.

The reason for the flight was to drop off memorabilia at the flight museum in Palm Springs, and he was not aware of any pressing reason for the pilot and passenger to return promptly that night. Bobs father was an Airforce Colonel, and they were donating some of his possessions to the museum.

The original plan was to leave at 0900 on Saturday. Theresa sent a text message at 1137 saying "VFR good, now leaving." At 1345 she sent a text message saying they had landed, and were taking a tour. He had no more contact with them. He called and both of their phones about 1800, and it went to voicemail so he became concerned. He went out to check their cars, which were both still in the parking lot. By 2000 he checked the flight progress on flightaware.com, and became very concerned when he saw the flight track. He then called FBO's at Santa Barbara along with the control tower, and nobody had seen them. He eventually called LA Center, and opened an ALNOT. Then LA Center called back and said there had been an accident.

The airplane had undergone an avionics upgrade in at Accurate in August; ADSB, GTN650, with Terrain and Traffic Information. Accurate also did the transponder and altimeter certification. Weather was available via ADSB.

Bob was a very competent pilot for his age, he “had his wits about him”. He was still gaining familiarity with the new avionics system, and was not fully proficient with its use and features. He had an iPad which he would use for weather and flight planning.

With regard to oxygen, Bob did have a supplemental system, but Mr. McGregor was only aware of it being used once during a trip to Oregon.



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Person Contacted: Deputy Galzote, Riverside County Sheriff's Department
NTSB Accident Number: WPR16FA014

Narrative:

During a telephone conversation on November 16, 2015, Deputy Galzote stated the following:

He was flying one of the Sheriff's Departments Airbus AS350B3 helicopters, callsign, "Star 97" about the time of the accident.

He and the tactical flight officer (TFO) had just flown inbound from Hemet to the Palm Springs area via the Banning Pass. They checked the weather about one hour before departure, and were concerned they would not be able to depart Hemet. They decided to fly, and the clouds decks through the pass were about 1,500 agl. There was no turbulence enroute, and they traversed the pass without incident.

After exiting the pass, they were contacted by SoCal approach, who reported an airplane in distress about 8 miles north of their location, and asked for their assistance. The mountains were obscured with clouds, and they attempted to go to the location provided by the approach controller from the east over a ridge, but the ridge was obscured by clouds. They changed direction, and attempted an approach from the north-northwest, and were able to climb higher. The TFO could see a plume of smoke in the distance, and as they approached the site from the west, they could see the source of the smoke. They assumed this was the wreckage, and as they approached, they confirmed it was. The cloud deck was about 100 ft above the wreckage. They assessed that the damage was so severe that survivors were unlikely, and therefore due to the precarious terrain, decided not to land.