



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

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Date: April 28, 2017
Person Contacted: Dee Grim, Craig McCully, Denny Granquist
NTSB Accident Number: WPR17FA091

Narrative:

During a conversation with Mr. Grim, Mr. McCully, and Mr. Granquist, who were friends with the pilot, and also a four-airplane formation flight that the accident pilot was participating in. They reported that the flight originally departed from Phoenix, Arizona, about 0800 at one of their hangars. Following a brief, the flight departed, and had an uneventful flight to Apple Valley, California, for lunch and a planned fuel stop.

Following lunch and a brief delay for weather, the flight of four departed Apple Valley about 1255, with a planned route of APV-PMD-YRVF-THP-PTV. As the flight neared the wind generator farm east of Tehachapi, California, they were at an altitude of about 7,500 feet mean sea level (msl), noting the cloud layer tops were about 6,500 feet msl. Mr. Grim, Mr. McCully, and Mr. Granquist stated that they maintained separation from an overcast to broken cloud layer throughout the area while looking for an opening to descend through. They added that some maneuvering was required to maintain 2,000 feet horizontal separation from the clouds.

They further stated that the flight was in an enroute formation, which allowed each pilot sufficient space to maneuver to remain clear of clouds and in a safe operating condition. As the flight passed Tehachapi, the flight began a shallow descent. During the descent, Mr. Grim, who was the lead pilot, lost sight of the accident pilot, who was positioned in the number two position (left of the lead pilot, in a diamond formation) and asked the accident pilot if he was ok. The accident pilot responded to Mr. Grim that he was ok.

A short time later, Mr. Grim asked the accident pilot a second time if he was ok, in which the accident pilot responded he was. Subsequently, Mr. Granquist, who was in the slot position (in trail of the lead pilot) reported that the accident pilot was behind his position and lower. Mr. Granquist stated that he eventually lost sight of the accident pilot and attempted to maneuver to

reestablish visual contact unsuccessfully. Mr. McCully, who was flying in the number 3 position (right side of lead), reported shortly after Mr. Granquist, lost sight of the accident pilot, he observed the accident pilot fly into a cloud layer while in a wings level, slightly nose low attitude, behind and lower than his position. The formation flight never reestablished radio or visual contact with the accident pilot.