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Statement to NTSB - Tom Little.

Accident - Brenda Richard 04.17.2017 - Statement prepared from notes taken at the time and recorded in my daybook, text messages recorded on my phone and my recollection.

I co-owned Trinidad TB20, registration N28070 with Brenda Richard, a private pilot with a considerable number of hours accumulated over 4 years. We often flew together, including very long cross country flights involving mountain flying. On at least 3 occasions we had flown together to Truckee (KTRK) from the San Francisco North Bay Area, with her as the handling pilot, for her to gain experience in preparation for later skiing trips. When leaving Truckee, it is not possible to head immediately on route to Petaluma (O69), or Gness Field (KDVO), our destination airports, due to the proximity of peaks in that direction. We had discussed the best route to adopt in most circumstances. When we'd flown to Truckee together, on departing, we'd climbed to the north towards Sierraville on an approximate 315-degree heading, and then turn onto a direct track towards Petaluma after about 15 to 20nm. This route took us over a valley and between peaks. On one of the occasions we flew there together there was a ceiling around 10000ft, but the visibility was good with no precipitation and this route gave good VFR conditions.

On a visit to the search and rescue center on April 20th, I was shown the radar recorded route taken by Brenda on the accident flight. I believe it to be quite close to the route we'd discussed and taken in our practice flights.

Prior to the weekend, Brenda and I had discussed her plan to take her family to Truckee for the Easter weekend. On Friday April 14th, she had first flown to Sacramento International airport (KSMF) to collect family members, then flown to Truckee with 3 passengers. I talked and text messaged with her a few times on the 14th and 15th. On April 16th, I received a text from her *"tomorrow is looking iffy on getting out"*. I replied *"Yes, I thought so, but you can have fun there"*. She replied, *"I think I'll have a window or two to get out, but I'm going to send C..... (her uncle) and A..... (her daughter) back to Sacramento with my brother"*, followed by, *"I guess the next question is, if I get out of here can I get into Petaluma?"*.

Brenda called me around lunch time on April 17th and we had a long conversation. She asked my opinion on her climbing through the overcast and flying home VFR on top, I told her not to try it. She asked me what the weather was like in Petaluma and did I think she could fly home later that day? We also discussed them staying overnight, which they did not want to do. At the time of the conversation I was at home 20 miles south of Petaluma, and told her that the cloud base at home was 1000ft with no sign of lifting, and not suitable for her to fly home. I was her mentor and she usually took my advice. At the end of the conversation she asked me if I thought the weather was likely to improve. I told her to call the aviation weather brief service, which I was later told she did around 14:00. I did not hear from her again and assume she'd stayed over another night.

At 8:30 that evening Brenda's daughter Danielle called me because her parents had not arrived home. It had been dark for some time and they had not responded to her calls to their cell phones. Also, she had called Truckee airport and been told that the Trinidad was no longer on the apron.

Because of this conversation with Danielle, at 20:37 I called Oakland Operations Watch Desk and talked to Lee - [REDACTED]. I have in my notes taken at the time about the call that *"he confirmed that Brenda had called weather brief at 2PM"*. Lee then initiated the missing aircraft Alert.

William H Sherlock



Date: June 14th 2018