

Accident # WPR17LA126

Date of Accident: May 4, 2017 Time: Estimated at 9:45 AM PDT.

Location: [REDACTED]. McCann Rd. Redcrest, CA 95569

Pilot in Command: Rex Whitlow (deceased) DOB [REDACTED], Age 61

Aircraft: Hurricane Ultralight 503 S/N 001

Engine Manufacturer: Bombardier – ROTAX GMBH, S/N 4837764, Type-503

Witness: Orel Whitlow - Father of deceased.

Tracy Whitlow – Spouse of deceased.

Tammy Whitlow – Daughter of deceased.

Investigative facts: I was notified of this event on the morning of June 21, 2017.

Arrangements were made to arrive on scene June 26, 2017 at 10am. Upon arriving, the following was discovered.

- Aircraft parts removed – Instrument Panel, Wings, Fuel Tank, and Carburetor w. Air Filter, Propeller, Prop Hub and Wheel Assemblies. Brake handle disconnected and 3 of 4 Spark plugs missing.
- Associated wiring, fuel lines found cut. Control cables disconnected.

Findings:

- Pistons will not move. No damage or excessive discoloration noted.
- Available Spark Plug shows normal burn pattern.
- Rudder has movement.
- Fuel/Water found in Engine.
- Fuel filter clean.
- Oil/Water found in engine.
- Throttle “Full Open: position.
- Ignition “ON”
- Carburetor/Air Filter – Intact, float bowls removed/missing, one of two main jets missing. Remaining main jet #158.

- Spark plugs lead shielding/insulator in poor condition.
- Numerous wires improperly/ poorly spliced and routed.
- EGT/CHT leads installed.
- Exhaust (rubber mounts) poor condition.

Notes: Deceased PIC- wife (Tracy) and daughter (Tammy) interviewed and provided the following information.

- Aircraft Bill of Sale (handwritten).
- Parts receipts.
- Airworthiness Certificate.

During interview, Tracy reported that husband had a drug and alcohol problem and was under the influence the day of the event. She also expressed concern for accomplishing aircraft maintenance while under the influence and stated that the day prior to the event; the PIC was attempting to troubleshoot, test and possibly repair a carburetor problem. Also attempted to change the pitch of the propeller to quiet the aircraft.

Tammy (daughter) reported that oversize tires were installed on the aircraft for smoother takeoff and landings on the river bed. The PIC often complained about the aircraft weight and inability to flare the aircraft upon landing. PIC estimate body weight is 170lbs. Leather clothes estimated at 38lbs, oversize tires weight unknown and unavailable at time of investigation.

[REDACTED]

Bart Hauger

Principle Maintenance Inspector

Oakland Flight Standards District Office

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]