



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Albert Nixon
Senior Aviation Accident Investigator
Western Pacific Region

Date: April 2, 2019
Person Contacted: John Koehler (Accident Pilot)
NTSB Accident Number: WPR18LA241

Narrative:

During a conversation with John Koehler, the following is a summary of what he stated:

- He flew earlier in the accident area on an instructional flight, but flew a slightly higher altitude.
- The winds at the time were perfectly calm.
- During accident flight, the altitude was between about 500 ft - 1000 ft agl.
- They were flying in the valley.
- There was higher terrain at the end of the valley, terrain to the right was below their altitude, and terrain to the left was higher.
- It was about 9,000 ft density altitude.
- There was a strong downdraft.
- Speed was minimum of maximum rate of climb (vy) speed.
- Flying north and turned left because the airplane lost altitude in a downdraft and now they were below terrain in front of them and to the right.
- Turned left because more room to turn than to the right.
- Turned left about 45 degrees of bank and maintained vy speed.
- Was rolling out of the 180° turn and thought turn was made when they struck trees/terrain.
- Checked winds before the first flight of the day.
 - Winds aloft was northwest about 15 knots.
- Flying in mountains about 20 years.
- He was a CFI in the Cessna 172.
- Airplane had STC which increased the maximum gross weight to 2,550 lbs.
- His weight was about 160 pounds and he estimated the other passengers to be 160 pounds and 200 pounds.
- The passengers had hand held cameras and no baggage.
- Had about 38 gallons for the flight.

- Another pilot was in the area about the same time and aborted from the area.
- Area air was a dry environment and would only use carb heat during landing (as required).
- Accident flight was only 18 minutes long but planned for 1 hour.



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

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Date: April 5, 2019
Person Contacted: Julia Smith (Pilot)
NTSB Accident Number: WPR18LA241

Narrative:

During a conversation with Julia Smith, the following is a summary of what she stated:

- She was a commercial pilot and had about 5,000 flight hours.
- She was flying on the day of John's accident about 7,000 to 8,000 ft msl.
- The weather was clear, and it was perfectly calm in the valley.
- However, over the ridgelines she experienced moderate turbulence.
- She was flying about 15 miles north of the Simplot mine area (the area of accident site).
- She was flying a Piper PA-16 Clipper, on a personal flight.
- Because of the turbulence, she flew back in the valleys.
- When she heard about John's accident place and time, she landed about the time he was taking off.
- She talked with John after he recovered from his accident.
- She had flown in the area before.
- She did not check the winds aloft that day.
- She estimated about 10% of her flights would experience moderate turbulence in that area.



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Date: April 5, 2019
Person Contacted: (Tristan Smith Passenger)
NTSB Accident Number: WPR18LA241

Narrative:

During a conversation with Tristan Smith, the following is a summary of what he stated:

- He was seated in the front right seat.
- He weight was about 215 lbs.
- It was the first time he flew to do observation of the markers.
- They circled around the white "X" markers a couple of times.
- The reason was for the mine site sectional.
- He was working for the Suncrest mines.
- The marker the accident was on, was the side of the tallest mountain.
- They circled around it and the pilot said prepare to crash.
- They then hit a pine tree while still in a turn.
- There were no unusual sounds in the airplane before the crash.
- The engine was at full power and perfectly fine.
- He did not notice they were low at any time.



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Date: April 5, 2019
Person Contacted: (Evan Hathaway Passenger)
NTSB Accident Number: WPR18LA241

Narrative:

During a conversation with Evan Hathaway, the following is a summary of what he stated:

- He was seated in the right back seat.
- He weight was about 180 lbs.
- He carried a phone and camera.
- It was the first time he flew to do observation of the markers.
- While observing the markers they decided to take another look.
- There was not enough altitude.
- The airplane was in a left bank for a 180° turn reversal.
- The pilot commented that were not going to make it and to prepare for impact.
- Flying with the pilot was normal and he was professional.
- There was descent weather by the accident site.
- He was concerned and aware of the high terrain.