

Stephen Stein
Senior Aviation Accident Investigator
Aviation Safety - Western Pacific Region

Date: September 25, 2022

Subject: WPR22FA354 - Record of Conversation

Contact: Corey Winters - Son of Accident Pilot

Mr. Winters reported that his father had departed from a private strip at his house in California and probably punched in the closest airport with an identifier. His father purchased property in Chehalis, Washington and had been slowly moving from his home in Llano, California.

Reading from Foreflight, the pilot's route of flight included:

- L00 - Rosamond, California
- 9CA7 - Sanger, California
- JAQ - Jackson, California
- GOO - Grass Valley, California
- 6K5 - Sisters, Oregon
- SPB - Scappoose, Oregon
- OWA2 - Curtis Airport (final destination)

Interview 2

Date: October 28, 2022

Mr. Winters stated that his father had been flying since before he was born. At some point the pilot purchased a small ultralight and crashed it and decided he needed some flight instruction, so he purchased the accident airplane and trained until he received his private pilot certificate. He also purchased a Rans S-12 XL light sport aircraft that he flew for about 200 hours, but he normally flew the accident airplane. Mr. Winters stated that his father flew the Cherokee [accident airplane] mostly in Southern California and had some exposure to Oregon for Vans training in an RV-7 around 2013. Mr. Winters, also a certificated airframe and powerplant mechanic, stated that the engine had been rebuilt about 40 hours before the accident and a new propeller had been installed. Despite the cylinders having been upgraded to 170 hp Mr. Winters did not feel like the engine reached this performance level.

His father had a dirt airstrip about 2,500 ft in length at his home in California where he would fly and Mr. Winters would sometimes accompany him. When he assembled the RV-7 he struggled flying the tailwheel and elected not to fly it too often. The accident pilot preferred the Cherokee. Mr. Winters reported that his father purchased his new property in Southern Washington about 6-7 years before the accident and started planning the accident flight about 4 years ago to reposition the Cherokee to his new home.

On the day of the accident his father contacted him before he made the flight. Mr. Winters asked his father what his plan was and his father stated that he was going to follow Interstate 5 north. He knew his father was going to stop over in Scappoose, Oregon for fuel at some point, but he was not aware of a stop in Sisters, Oregon. They discussed the length of the trip, which was likely going to be 10-11 hours with stops. His father told him the airplane was operating normally. According to Mr. Winters, his brother and his father flew the airplane a day before he left and observed one cylinder running a little hot, but it wasn't an operational issue.

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Date: October 3, 2022

Subject: WPR22FA354 - Record of Conversation

Contact: Bill Mccallister - Witness

Mr. Mccallister stated that he knew the accident pilot for about 15 years and that they had flown together, but not much in the previous 5 years. They flew a total of about 14 hours in the pilot's RV6 airplane and 1-2 times in his Piper Cherokee [the accident airplane]. The witness reported that he owned a Citabria and a Glider that he flew. According to Mr. Mccallister, the pilot's Cherokee sat in his hangar with the RV6 and accumulated about 2-4 total flight hours in over 5 years. The pilot had never performed a cross country flight to Washington.

Mr. Mccallister helped the pilot plan the accident flight. For weather conditions they looked at weather the weekend before the accident flight and noticed inclement weather and rain that was starting to "let up." They decided the pilot should try to depart Thursday (the day of the accident) and reviewed the plan and weather together the day before the flight, but the weather still didn't look good. They decided the pilot should fly up Interstate 5, where the weather was clearer. Mr. Mccallister then texted the pilot at 0630 on the morning of the accident flight to inform him that the weather didn't look good or clear from the forecast and that he should plan to depart in the mid-afternoon or later north of the Oregon border. The pilot did not respond to the text message.

Mr. Mccallister stated that they looked at weather forecasts on both sides of the Cascade mountains through the website weather.com. They also checked AWOS for his weather enroute and a moving map with Foreflight that displayed weather conditions, in addition to windy.com and NOAA.

They talked about the pilot remaining east of the Cascade mountains and would have to make a determination during the flight whether he could crossover to western Oregon.



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Contact: Rebecca Hoffman - Witness

According to Ms. Hoffman, she was hiking along the Pacific Crest Trail near Swallow Lake junction heading southbound. The conditions were near whiteout with rain and fog. Visibility was about 100-200 ft at the surface and her surroundings were obstructed. About the time of the accident, which she estimated was between 1430-1445, she heard a small airplane that sounded close. Approximately 30 seconds later she heard a loud thud at which time the engine sound ceased. She stated that the engine sounded like it was running "normal" (smooth and continuous) before the airplane crashed.

She reported that the weather had been changing steadily throughout the day, but was foggy throughout the entire day and clearer in a few areas along the trail. She recalled that from noon to the accident the conditions "very foggy and very windy".



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Contact: Colton Kaspi - Witness

Mr. Kaspi stated that at the time of the accident he was walking on the ridgeline (44.569163, -121.801739) near South Cinder Peak at the time of the accident on a foggy and windy day. He was listening to music in his right ear when he thought he heard an engine. The sound of the engine then increased and he then heard a "thunk" sound accompanied by an abrupt end to the engine sound.

The witness reported that the visibility was alternating between 25 and 50 yards throughout the day with complete whiteout due to thick fog. The wind was blowing hard from west to east. He estimated that the winds were about 40 mph or more along the ridgeline. Around South Cinder peak the wind was swirling and within a minute after the crash he could smell fumes, which he noted was a "gassy" smell.