

RECORD OF ☐ VISIT ☐ CONFERENCE OR ☒ TELEPHONE CALL		TIME 11:30 AM	DATE 04/03/2023
NAME (S) OF PERSON (S) CONTACTED OR IN CONFERENCE AND LOCATION		ROUTING	
		SYMBOL	INITIALS
Anthony Vella [REDACTED]			
Non-Certificated Part 103 Paraglider Instructor			
SUBJECT Witness Interview of 4/1/23 Santa Teresa Ultralight Accident			
DIGEST Anthony Vella states that, on the morning of 4/1/2023, he and his student (unidentified) were conducting a training flight in a Part 103 paraglider. At 0712, during his preflight, he claims that he received a call from Lee Boone (mishap pilot) but did not answer. There was no message. He was airborne at 0715 and climbed to 1000 feet AGL to operate southwest of the airport. He saw the Aerotrike Cobra operated by Lee Boone at around 0740. The Cobra was about 1/4-mile to the north of him in level flight and maybe 1,100 feet AGL. Anthony split his observation between the Cobra and his student. When he looked back at the Cobra, he noted that it was making a turn towards his position to the south. He looked back to check on his student. When he returned his scan back to the Cobra, he noted it was in a flat spin. It did not recover from that spin and impacted the ground. Nothing appeared to be broken (i.e. trusses poking out or airframe distortion) and the wing was not deformed. The engine appeared to be operating normally. He flew to the scene to check on his friend who had been piloting the Cobra (photograph in NTSB field notes). He made an immediate return to DNA to report what he saw. We discussed possible causes of the accident. He did not think it was possible to stall a delta winged ultralight. However, he called another instructor to learn whether an			
CONCLUSION, ACTION TAKEN, OR REQUIRED			
DATE 04/03/2023	TITLE Aviation Safety Inspector	SIGNATURE Michael J Petrofes	

Digitally signed by Michael J Petrofes
Date: 2023.04.04 09:02:43 -06'00'

ultralight spins. He learned that a delta (or flex wing) could spin through a combination of low airspeed, high engine torque and dropping the wingtip as it enters the stall. Once entered, the flat spin is unrecoverable. He asked if the FAA or NTSB had any SME concerning this phenomena.

I asked if he had a video of the accident. He stated that although he had a GoPro camera, the view was blocked and he was unable to see anything in the replay.

I asked if he could see any pilot actions. He claimed that at first it appeared that the pilot was trying to figure out what was happening. Anthony couldn't understand why the parachute was not deployed. He went on to surmise that the pilot probably thought he could recover from the spin.

I asked about the ultralight registration. Anthony did not believe that the accident Aerotrike Cobra should have been considered Part 103. "I do not know why Lee's trike was unregistered. It weighed about 370 pounds." It was his opinion that the Cobra should have been considered EXPERIMENTAL. He was pretty sure it had a larger engine horsepower and larger fuel tank. He said that Lee was not an instructor and therefore wouldn't be covered by the weight exemption.

I asked about the preflight procedure for an ultralight. He answered that it is a simple matter of spreading and pinning the wings. But he did not see anything deformed regarding the wings prior to or during the spin.

I asked if there was anything else he would like to add. He was concerned that this event would reflect poorly on the Soaring Association. I assured him, that if anything, we are going to add the El Paso Soaring Association to our surveillance activities and help determine what other trikes may need to be inspected and registered.

The interview was concluded at 1210 MDT.