

**Aircraft**

N4267R

PA 32-300

S/N 32-40641

Last known Inspection – E-1 Inspection complied with on 11/17/12 @ TT 6798.75

TT 6801.35

**Engine**

Lycoming

IO-540-K1A5

S/N L-15134-48AC

TT 5817.5

TSMOH 515.5

Installed 7/23/2012

**Propeller**

Hartzell

HC-C3YR-1RF/F7663R

S/N PA357B

Installed 6/25/2012

TSN 805.0 hours

**Pilot**

Jae H Choi

Commercial / Flight Instructor

Hire Date by Star – 12/28/2011

Hours in Make Model – 674.1

Hours in last 90 Days – 137.2

Hours in last Year – 674.1

Total Hours – 1237.6

Last Regulatory Check Ride – 01/11/2012

**Weather a non-Factor**

## **Accident Scene**

The accident occurred at the Saipan International Airport (PGSN).

The first point of impact was approx. 1680' from the center line of Delta Intersection, approx. 36' north of runway 24. The left wing separated and was approx. 108' 10" from the first point of impact. The fuselage came to rest approx. 114' from the left wing and against a row of trees.

There were a parts of the cockpit window that were found surrounding the left wing, along with the left main landing gear that was approx. 9' 8' north of the left wing, indications that the left gear was sheared off.

Two fires were reported, a small fire erupted in the cabin area, and then a secondary fire engulfed the cabin area.

Examination of the left wing, showed compression damage in the center of the wing, the outboard fuel tank was ruptured. The aileron and flap hinge points were intact. A fuel sample was obtained from the left wing inboard fuel tank. The sample was collected in a clear glass jar, with no visual signs of water or other contaminants.

Examination of the tail section, showed no signs of visual damage to the vertical stabilizer and stabilator.

Cabin section showed evidence of fire damage.

The flap handle was in the approx. position for a normal takeoff setting, it appeared by examining the right flap, the flaps were set for a normal take off.

A flight control integrity check was completed of the flight controls. Due to the impact and the left wing separating, the controls that were able to be verified were intact. The rudder, stabilator, right aileron all showed signs of controllability.

The engine controls were set for a normal takeoff, the power lever, prop control, mixture control. An engine control integrity check was performed, controls appeared to be intact and controlling the required component.

The fuel selector valve was in the approximate position of the right outboard tank. This could be contrary to company procedures which are to position the selector valve pointing to the wing/tank that points east when flying from and to Saipan/Tinian. In this

instance the fuel selector valve normally would have been in the left outboard tank position flying from Saipan to Tinian.

An examination of the right over wing entrance door, the lower handle integrity check was performed; the handle mechanism was still intact and able to move the latching mechanism. The upper lock hook, was frozen in the 12'clock position (locked position) and unable to move the handle control.

The vertical speed indicator showed a 2000ft per min descent. The fuel gauges indicated the following:

Right outboard tank – needle indicating approx. ½ full

Right inboard tank – needle indicating approx. ¼ full

Left inboard tank – unknown – face of gauge destroyed

Left outboard tank – needle pointing straight to the 6'oclock position

Manifold pressure indicated 30", this appears to be normal for an engine off indication, indicating atmospheric conditions

Inspection of the engine and engine compartment – no evidence of fire, spark plugs were intact, spark plug leads were intact, along with the fuel injector lines. Visual indication of the engine appeared to be normal, damage to the engine and prop appeared to be caused by impact.

Visual inspection of the right wing, the outboard section of the wing was severely damaged. The right outboard fuel tank was again ruptured, unable to gain a fuel sample. The right inboard fuel tank when sumped did show signs of fuel dripping but due to the angle, very little was accessible.

### **Notes concerning Star procedures**

There is no radio communication between the pilot and the Saipan station, if the pilot encounters a problem, he returns to the Saipan station for further assistance.

The aircraft are sumped on a daily basis, dispatch is then notified. The aircraft are not to be released until dispatch is notified that the job is completed.

Saipan Airport does not have an Avgas supplier. The fuel Star uses fuel that is shipped in and stored to two ISO containers solely for their operation. The fuel is then transferred from these ISO containers to a portable fueling bowser. This bowser has a filter installed, which filters the fuel before being pumped into the aircraft. The bowser is sumped on a daily basis, and the filter is due to be changed in Dec 2012, as indicated by a placard on the filter housing. This bowser is usually filled 5 – 6 times a day from the ISO containers.

## **Interviews**

### **Robert Quitugua - Tower Controller at the time of the accident 10/22/12**

Robert stated he was on duty from approx. midnight of the 11/18/12. He received the radio call from the pilot of N4267R, that he wanted to return to Saipan Airport, Robert could not see him, so he ask his current position. Robert gave him clearance to land on runway 7 and asked if he needed emergency services. Robert then gave him clearance to turn off on Bravo intersection, and commented to the fact this had happened to the pilot just recently. Robert gave him permission to accomplish a 180 degree turn on Bravo intersection, and accomplish a quick run up. Robert then cleared N4267R for takeoff on runway 7, after the required 3 minute caution for wake turbulence due to a Delta 757 that had just taken off. Robert could see the takeoff of N4267R and estimates the aircraft was approx. 100 feet in the air, as the aircraft crossed Delta inspection on runway 7, he then observed the aircraft complete a left turn , and remembers the pilot asking for something on the radio at this point, as in “May I”. He then lost the aircraft behind the trees and called for Saipan Airport ARFF.

### **Juanito Simitara – passenger aboard the flight in question 10/21/2012**

Juanito’s english is limited, interview was conducted with assistance of a Star Marianas representative.

Mr. Simitara states he was a passenger on the aircraft, he was sitting in the last row of the seats on the left side of the aircraft. He remembers taking off the first time, and then being over water when the aircraft returned. He stated the first flight seemed normal and does not recall the pilot stating why they were returning to Saipan. He did remember the pilot doing a run up and he gestured with his head as if the pilot was checking something on the gauges. He then remembers the feeling of the aircraft rocking back and forth, and then going left. He remembers a lady screaming, and then opening up the door next to him and assisting the lady sitting next to him out of the aircraft, and seeing the pilot

standing by the aircraft. He noticed a small fire around the aircraft, then after getting out saw a bigger fire.

**George Danison – Star Marianas pilot that was on the ramp getting ready to load his passengers for a flight to Tinian**  
**11/21/2012**

George was on the ramp getting ready to load his passengers for a flight to Tinian. He noticed the aircraft at Bravo intersection due to the fact the aircraft was sitting there doing a power run for approx. 45 seconds. At that time, the engine sounded fine. He next saw the aircraft taxi onto runway 7 at Bravo intersection, and watched the takeoff; he noticed the aircraft climb to approx. 100 feet, he said the engine sounded fine, then as if the engine lost power and never continued to climb, noticed the aircraft begin a left turn and entered a nose down attitude. He then lost sight of the aircraft but heard the sound of an impact.

George typed a statement as well, and it has been included in the package that was sent.

**Ken Lam – A Star Marianas pilot**  
**11/23/2012**

Ken is a Star Marianas pilot who speaks Chinese, which was sent over Friday November 23, 2012 in the morning on behalf of the Star Marianas to speak with the passengers. He stated he was able to speak with only two of the passengers and two of the passengers were told not to speak to Star, not sure who told them not to.

No official representative from the FAA was there during these conversations. This is only accounts of what Ken informed me during a conversation in Tinian at the operators' facilities.

Ken informed me he spoke to the passenger that was sitting in far right seat in the middle row, she noted the first take off and turned around over the water, she told Kim she does not know why they turned around. Passenger informed Ken, she may have noticed the pilot reaching for the door and the possibility of trying to close the door during the first flight, and doesn't remember the pilot checking the door after landing.

Ken spoke with the passenger in the last row of seat and sitting in the far right seat. Passenger stated she really couldn't tell about touching the door and does not remember too much about the accident.