

Date 05/06/20

Time 12:45 PM

INFORMATION:

On 8/31/18 around 2149HRS Chippewa County Central Dispatch (CCCD) aired a call for a possible plane crash in Lake Huron off of the Mackinac County Airport. Sgt. Umbarger, Deputy Davis, and Deputy Hookana responded from the Mackinac County Sheriff's Office (MCSO). MCSO was assisted by St. Ignace Police and Fire Departments, US Coast Guard (USCG), Mackinac Island Marine Rescue, and Michigan State Police (MSP).

REPOSENSE TO SCENE (DAVIS/UMBARGER):

Sgt. Umbarger and I, Deputy Paul Davis, responded to the call in the MCSO Stanley Boat. We were the first water response in the area and stated our search due east of the Mackinac County Airport. We coordinated with Deputy Hookana who was on shore speaking with the caller/witness. Deputy Hookana told us an approximate area to search based off of the witnesses.

After several grid passes going from east to west we located debris. We first located a piece of maroon carpet attached to a section of sheet metal. The coordinates of this first sign of debris was N45 54.371 W84.688. This was at 2325HRS.

At 2327HRS we located a door panel and at 2329HRS found a maroon seat. The items we were locating were on a 320Degree heading from the first debris coordinates.

USCG helicopter back tracked to the southeast on the opposite heading a reported an oil sheen on the water.

We cleared the water on 9/1/18 around 0100HRS and Deputy Harrigan relieved us to continue the search.

Witness Account Summary-

Plane left Mackinac County Airport at approximately 21:45 hours heading to Mackinac Island Airport to pick up 4 passengers. Witnesses stated that the plane was flying low 100-200 foot above ground heading north/northeast, banked right/east towards Mackinac Island; witnesses lost sight for 10-15 seconds, and heard the water crash of the plane. Wreckage has been located and marked by GPS Coordinates (attached).

Departure/Destination-

Burlington Airport, Wisconsin to Mackinac Island, departing 15:45 CST

FAA Notification-

Date 05/06/20

Time 12:45 PM

Phone: [REDACTED]

Michael Matthews- [REDACTED]

Mr. Matthews notified NTSB of crash, **MATTHEWS REQUESTED TO BE NOTIFIED WHEN PLANE IS LOCATED.**

Medical Examiner-

Dr. Carl Hawkins had been informed of situation by incident command.

Next Of Kin Notification-

Contact made with Walworth County ORI-WI0650000 by NLETS for notification. NLETS message attached.

[REDACTED]

Victim/Pilot-

gue, [REDACTED]

Complainant-

son, [REDACTED]

Witness #1-

son, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Date 05/06/20

Time 12:45 PM

Phone: [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Witness #6-

Paul Fullerton- Airport Manager

Stated that pilot fueled up plane 35 gallons at 19:35. Prior to leaving for island he borrowed van to go into town for McDonalds and left before 22:00. Credit card name matched plane owner. Paul tried to call pilot on radio after crash, no response.

Plane Info-

Tail #N-500MJ

Registered to Victim

1979, Piper, PA-32RT-300T, Fixed wing single engine, 7 seat

SN- 32R-7987051

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Date 05/06/20

Time 12:45 PM

Phone: [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

SUPPLEMENTAL REPORT - DEPUTY HARRIGAN:

On SEPTEMBER 1st, 2018 while at home I was notified by Deputy Eby that I was needed to assist with this incident. Deputy Eby advised we were being requested by Sheriff Strait to relieve Sergeant Umbarger and Deputy Davis and continue searching for items related to the plane crash. At about 0045 hours Deputy Eby and I responded to the Huskey building to pick up a vehicle needed to transport debris already found by Sergeant Umbarger and Deputy Davis. Upon arrival Sheriff Strait was there expressing concerns for having to put water logged items inside a vehicle. I offered up the use of my personal truck and Sheriff Strait agreed to this. Deputy Eby and I picked up my truck from my residence and responded to the city boat launch. Upon arrival we assisted Sergeant Umbarger and Deputy Davis with loading up the debris they had found. After being briefed on the incident Deputy Eby and I boarded the boat and responded to crash site area. We performed a grid search pattern in an attempt to locate the pilot, wreckage, and debris. We located various items throughout the search, including a piece of interior paneling, envelope with hand written notes on it, and a what appeared to be a piece of exterior paneling. Each time we located an item the GPS coordinates of its location were called into Sector Soo via the VHF radio.

At about 0415 hours, Deputy Eby spoke with Sheriff Strait via phone. Sheriff Strait advised the MSP dive team would be on scene shortly, and we could clear the water. We returned to the dock and secured the boat. Afterwards, the items we located were taken to the Huskey building and were stored with other items that had been previously recovered.

At 0445 hours, we cleared the Huskey building and checked out of service.

SUPPLIMENTAL REPORT - DEPUTY LARSON:

Date 05/06/20

Time 12:45 PM

On SEPTEMBER 1st 2018 I, DEPUTY LARSON, assisted with the recovery of the above reported plane crash into Lake Huron near Saint Ignace. At 0800 hours DEPUTY COTTENHAM and I met up with CHIEF BABIONE f

[REDACTED]

The property was photographed and placed in a paper evidence bag and given to DEPUTY DAVIS.

ADDITIONAL:

DEPUTY COTTENHAM and I conducted Marine Patrol of the crash site area including horseshoe bay and the shoreline near the airport at 0900 hours on 9/1/18. We assisted the MSP dive team as they conducted their Sonar Scan of the lake bed. At approximately 1100 hours I was advised by Undersheriff Wilk that the dive team has located some anomalies on the lake bed about 1.3 miles from shore on Lake Huron, they would be returning with the divers to check the scene. The MSP team provided the following coordinates to the debris field; N45* 54.1563' W84* 42.4127'. The site was marked with a MSP Buoy.

At approximately 1400 hours the MSP dive team returned with their divers and searched the crash site. DEPUTY COTTENHAM and I secured the scene during this time. We were also assisted by DEPUTIES SHERLUND and SADLER on the water. At approximately 1500 hours the Dive Team advised us that they confirmed they had located the fuselage, wheels, tail and both winds of the plane. At this time they had not discovered the remains of the missing pilot. DEPUTY COTTENHAM and I cleared the scene with the Dive Team at 1530 hours.

SUPPLEMENT REPORT- DEPUTY DAVIS:

[REDACTED]

On 9/1/18 around 1000HRS I, Deputy Paul Davis came into service to continue with the search. I performed a search on shore near the end of Rabbits Back Rd. in St. Ignace Township. I found debris directly off the end of Rabbits Back Rd. I found several pieces of carpeting similar to that I found on the boat the previous night. I also found a variety of other items that could be related to the crash. Below is a list of my property and its corresponding property tag number.

[REDACTED]

SUPPLIMENTAL REPORT - DEPUTY COTTENHAM:

On 09/02/2018 I, Deputy Cottenham, and Sergeant Umbarger assisted with the recovery of the above reported plane crash into Lake Huron near Saint Ignace. At 1600 hours, Sergeant Umbarger and I met with Deputy Sherlund and members of the Michigan State Police dive team at the Saint Ignace public boat launch. The MSP dive team located a part of the aircrafts fuselage on 09/01/2018, and they were out on Lake Huron attempting to lift it with ballasts and tow it to shore. Deputy Sherlund handed us two items the dive team recovered while attaching the ballasts to the fuselage. The items reportedly floated out of the fuselage. The property is as follows:

County Sheriff Report CEN18FA368

Incident Report

Date 05/06/20

Time 12:45 PM

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

The property was photographed by Sergeant Umbarger, and placed in the Mackinac County Sheriff's Office secure storage facility in Saint Ignace.

ADDITIONAL:

Sergeant Umbarger, and I conducted Marine Patrol near the crash site, and secured the area while the Michigan State Police dive team attached ballasts to the aircrafts fuselage. Deputy Sherlund also responded to the crash site to assist.

The dive team raised the fuselage around 1740 hours, and began towing it to Saint Ignace City Dock #3 near the United States Coast Guard station. Sergeant Umbarger and I flanked the MSP vessel on its port side, while Deputy Sherlund flanked the starboard side. We remained with the MSP vessel until it arrived at the Saint Ignace City Dock #3 at 2045 hours

MSP dive team personnel advised they were unhooking the fuselage near the end of the pier in approximately twenty feet of water. The tow straps needed to be repositioned in order tow the fuselage out of the water. MSP dive team personnel advised they would return at daylight and reposition the straps.

Sergeant Umbarger contacted Chief Wilk of the Saint Ignace Police Department and advised the fuselage would be left near the pier for the night. Sergeant Umbarger and I cleared with the MSP dive team at 2100 hours.

SUPPLEMENTAL REPORT - SERGEANT RONALD J. UMBARGER:

On September 3, 2018 at approx. 1343 hrs, Sheriff Scott Strait and I met the MSP dive team at the Saint Ignace City Dock #3. The MSP dive team deployed divers at approx. 1358 hours on this date and they refloated the aircraft fuselage and positioned it along the back wall of the dock where Belonga Excavating was able to hook onto it with chains that were attached by the MSP dive team. The chains appeared to be attached to the air bag straps that were already in place.

Belonga Excavating used their excavator to lift and pull the fuselage to the boat ramp and placed it onto a large trailer. The plane was secured to the trailer by chains and driven to Mackinac County Airport where it was placed in Great Lakes Air hanger #1A by Belonga Excavating by way of a front end loader. The plane is being held pending follow up investigation by FAA officials.

County Sheriff Report CEN18FA368

Incident Report

Date 05/06/20

Time 12:45 PM

Phone: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

It should be noted that the entire lift was video recorded at various critical points and still photos were also taken. Sheriff Strait sent 4 pictures of the plane's fuselage to the FAA that showed the condition of same. The video was downloaded on the MCSO secure server: Road Patrol - Investigations - 1413-18.

Also on this date, MSP dive team member Trooper Jackson TOT a damaged "go-pro" style camera with a mini-SD card that was found inside the aircraft while it was being prepped for extraction. The item was tagged as evidence and I secured it with the other items recovered from the plane at the Husky building. This item was laid out to dry. This item was tagged as #42 and logged on MCSO Property Form.

SUPPLIMENTAL REPORT - DEPUTY COTTENHAM:

On 09/02/2018, at 1850 hours I, Deputy Cottenham, and Sheriff Strait met with members of the Michigan State Police dive team at the Saint Ignace public boat launch. The MSP dive team located additional parts of the aircraft near the crash site. Sergeant Dale Lynema located the items, and turned them over to us. The property is as follows:

EVIDENCE:

Item #43 - One Red / White Aircraft Fuel Tank
Item #44 - One Red / Maroon Aircraft Passenger Seat

I photographed the property with my departmental digital camera, and placed them within the Mackinac County Sheriff's Office secure storage facility in Saint Ignace.

STATUS:

Open

SUPPLEMENTAL REPORT - DEPUTY HARRIGAN:

On September 5, 2018 I was asked to assist with obtaining photographs of the various recovered pieces of debris located at the Mackinac County Airport Hanger. The photographs were obtained and are stored on this agencies

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

server. While at the airport hanger I assisted investigation staff with piecing together and sorting the various items. During this time, I made two separate trips to the St. Ignace boat launch to collect various pieces of debris the MSP dive team had recovered. These items varied from paneling, windows, documents, and other miscellaneous items. These items were transported to the airport hanger and were turned over to investigation staff.

The following investigation staff members at the airport hanger have been added to the LEMS report and they include:

Alex Lemishko, Senior Air Safety Investigator, National Transportation Safety Board
NTSB Washington D.C.

[REDACTED]

Jonathon Hirsh, Piper Air Safety Investigator

[REDACTED]

Michael Matthews, Federal Aviation Administration-Principle Maintenance Inspector
Flight Standards District Office

[REDACTED]

John Butler, Lycoming Engines

[REDACTED]

While assisting at the airport hanger Jonathon called me over to the cockpit area of the plane. He pointed to a small yellowish pale colored item and asked if it was a piece of bone. Upon looking at it, it appeared to be a small piece of bone. Initially it looked like a tooth but upon further examination it was determined it was not likely to be a tooth. It was photographed and placed into an evidence bag. Prior to securing it in an evidence locker I had Assistant Medical Examiner Mark Wilk look at it. It was his opinion the piece of bone was part of a nasal bone. He advised he would be in contact with Medical Examiner Hawkins to see if he could take a

Incident Report

Date 05/06/20

Time 12:45 PM

[REDACTED]

look at it. The item was secured in an evidence locker and is awaiting further examination by Medical Examiner Hawkins.

On September 5, 2018 this office received the MISLE report from Chief Babion, USCG, Station St. Ignace. It has been added to this report.