

Communication Summary

January 29, 2019

Information from: Mr. Roger Gebel, MHE FBO Manager



Summary & Factual Information: Mr. Gebel, in part, reported that:

[The pilot] arrived at Mitchell late morning in his Piper archer N75191. I heard him make a traffic call earlier as he entered the area. Next thing I know he had parked himself on the ramp about 300ft. away from the FBO. He came in and up to the counter where he asked to use the courtesy car to run to Cabelas for a while. After a couple of hours. he came back carrying a couple of sacks of stuff he bought from Cabelas. We talked for a while catching up on things. He was looking forward too & talked about the upcoming airshow this summer in Sioux Falls & hope I could make it to see the Thunderbirds. [The pilot] walked out of the office and went to the entryway bulletin board which he looked at for 10 minutes. He then got into his airplane and departed to the east. He seemed fine, nothing unusual, just out enjoying the day flying & doing a little shopping at Cabelas. I never got near the airplane while it was here.

About 15 – 20 minutes later I heard him call out on CTAF “ Wright Bros. Roger do you copy?
I said “ this is Roger, go ahead.”
He said” I’m having problems”
I said what’s going on?
He said I’m having chest pains. I think I can work this out.
I said are you returning back to Mitchell?
He said No I’m going to head east.
I said to Tea?
He said Yes.
I asked where are you now?
He said I’m 39 out. I took that as being 39 miles out from Tea.
I noted the time 2:05 pm
I told him to call when he gets to Tea so I know you made it.
He said he would.
That was the last contact I had with him.

I called Legacy Aviation at Tea to see if [the pilot] had landed or if they had heard him on the radio. [An FBO employee] said they had not. I asked him to call out on the radio. He did. No response. I asked [him] to go see if [the pilot’s] vehicle is at or in his hangar. He called back and said his pickup was still parked by his hangar. I said we need to call CAP to get a search going. [The FBO employee] suggested and then he called Sioux Falls Tower to see if they had contact with [the pilot]. While he was doing that a customer who was in our lobby at the time said he just got a text from someone in the town near the crash site. He said the storm chasers (emergency management team) had just got dispatched to look for a possible downed aircraft in the area. By

that time [the FBO employee] called me back again and said Sioux Fall tower had not had contact with [the pilot]. I then called Sioux Falls tower to get CAP looking for [the pilot]. That is when they told me that they could confirm that an aircraft had went down in the Canastota area the McCook county sheriff department was at the crash site. I asked if was a fatality? They said they couldn't release any further details and that I need to contact McCook county sheriff department. They gave me their number, I called & got an answering machine & left them a message explaining what I know. I then called our local emergency dispatch office, told them what I knew, they want to know who & how many people on board. (1 person, [the pilot's name], N75191) They confirmed to me that the McCook county sheriff Department was on site and there was a fatality.

Mr. Gebel was further asked if the airplane had received any services at MHE and he indicated that the airplane received no services there.

I can attest that the above summary is correct to the best of my knowledge:

Edward F. Malinowski
National Transportation Safety Board
Air Safety Investigator