



## MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

**Stephen Stein**  
**Air Safety Investigator**  
**National Transportation Safety Board**  
**Office of Aviation Safety – Western Pacific Region**

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**NTSB Accident Number: WPR15FA247**  
**Aircraft Registration & Make/Model: N62731; Cessna 172P**  
**Accident Location: Townsend, Montana**  
**Accident Date: August 19, 2015**

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Note: The following interviews were documented by the Investigator-In-Charge (IIC), Stephen Stein.

### Interview #1 Summary

**Evelyn Gluhm**  
Wife of Accident Pilot

Interview date range: August 24, 2015 – September 1, 2015

The accident pilot's wife provided a synopsis of the pilot's activities during the 72 hours that preceded the accident. According to Mrs. Gluhm, her husband was the Pastor of a church. On Sunday, August 16, 2015, her husband woke up at 0800 to prepare for a church service that took place at 1045 and ended about 1300. She recalled there were no particular stresses that day apart from their normal activities. After church he had lunch with some members of the congregation at a local café, as was his custom. He took a nap in the afternoon and then completed some chores around the house.

On Monday, Mrs. Gluhm had left the house before her husband woke up. During the day he met with members of the community at a local café. He followed a similar routine Tuesday.

On Wednesday, the accident pilot flew to Helena to transport some items back to White Sulphur Springs. Mrs. Gluhm drove to Helena to collect some items that would not fit on the airplane. By the time she returned to White Sulphur Springs, her husband was preparing for another flight to

Helena to pick up a friend who was arriving in Helena on a commercial flight. The pilot departed White Sulphur Springs about 2000 for the 45 minutes flight to Helena. He called his wife at 2211 to tell her that he was departing for White Sulphur Springs. Her husband's friend was a 25 year resident of White Sulphur Springs who had returned from visiting his younger daughter in Ohio.

Mrs. Gluhm reported that her husband routinely goes to bed around 2230 and wakes up at 0800. She did not observe any abnormalities in her husband's sleep habits in the four days that preceded the accident.

According to Mrs. Gluhm, she had flown with her husband to Helena, Montana on 4 separate occasions. During each flight, they would normally fly over Townsend Lake when returning from Helena. If the cloud ceiling was low they would circumvent the mountain range and fly over "Dry Range." She remarked that the airport appeared to be "right in front of them" when they crossed the mountain range on their way to Helena Airport. Mrs. Gluhm added that her husband normally navigated using VOR; she would frequently ask why the line was "so far off" and her husband would respond, "because we have to go around the mountain."



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### Interview #1 Summary

**Harold Dramstad**  
Certified Flight Instructor to Accident Pilot

Interview date and time: August 22, 2015; 1300 MDT

In Attendance: Stephen Stein (NTSB), Jack Vanover (NTSB)

According to Mr. Dramstad, he received his Private Pilot Certificate in 2003 and subsequently earned his Certified Flight Instructor certificate in 2006. He was a full time flight instructor from 2008 to January 2015, at which time he accepted a position with the Montana Aeronautics Division. At the time of the accident, he held an Air Transport Pilot Certificate and was flying part time in the Governor's King Air C90. Mr. Dramstad stated that he has endorsed 80 applications for check rides since he received his CFI.

The flight instructor reported that he was introduced to the accident pilot when he was an instructor with Vetter Aviation, a flight school at Helena Regional Airport, Helena, Montana. He started instructing the accident pilot on April 25, 2013 in a 160 horsepower Cessna 172M model rental airplane. The accident pilot accrued 28.6 flight hours before he was endorsed to solo.

Mr. Dramstad remembered that the accident pilot was a minister who owned a saw mill and was not a “drinking man.” When he first soloed the pilot, he endorsed him to commute back and forth between Helena and White Sulphur Springs, Montana, his town of residence.

The instructor and the accident pilot completed two night flights together. Their first flight was accomplished on October 4, 2013 and involved a round trip cross country flight from Helena, Montana to Bozeman, Montana. The total flight time was 1.8 hours during which time they completed 3 night landings. A second night flight was completed locally with 12 night landings and a total of 1.2 flight hours. Mr. Drumstad stated that they did not fly to White Sulphur during either night flight, nor did they cross the mountain range between Helena and White Sulphur.

The pilot had accumulated about 15.9 total hours of flight experience when he purchased the accident airplane in 2014.

When asked about the accident pilot’s aeronautical decision making and piloting abilities, Mr. Dramstad stated that he was “typical for someone starting in their late 50’s.” It took him twice as long as a person in their 20’s to complete his Private Pilot Certificate.

Mr. Dramstad heard that the pilot had been looking at the electrical system on the day of the accident. The instructor stated that the instruments in the accident airplane were not backlit.



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### Interview #1 Summary

**Jeff Hahlbohm**  
Aircraft Mechanic, Vetter Aviation

Interview date & time: September 18, 2015; 0746 PDT

According to Mr. Hahlbohm, the accident pilot contacted the mechanic's employer, Vetter Aviation, about one week prior to the accident to "get his lights working." The mechanic reported that the pilot came to his maintenance facility on the day of the accident to replace a dome lightbulb. Although Mr. Hahlbohm remembered removing the bulb, he believes one of their other mechanics provided the pilot with the replacement bulb. He added that the instrument lighting was provided by an overhead light with a red lens directed towards the instrument panel that illuminates when the pilot activates the instrument lighting. The airplane's instruments were not backlit. The mechanic did not personally test the lights after the bulb had been replaced; however, the pilot reported to Mr. Hahlbohm that the overhead lights were functioning normally following the replacement.



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### Interview #1 Summary

**Josh Gluhm**  
Son of Accident Pilot

Interview date & time: September 1, 2015; 0800 PDT

According to Mr. Gluhm, he flew with his father from White Sulphur to Helena “dozens” of times. During each trip they would take a different route. At times they would fly over the “Helena/White Sulphur” mountain range for sight-seeing. When they would fly from White Sulphur to Helena, sometimes they would proceed North to fly over the mountain range, a route that would take them directly over Canyon Ferry Lake.

The pilot’s son stated that his father would seldom fly below 7,500 feet.



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### Interview #1 Summary

**Kurt Burns**  
Airport Manager, White Sulphur Springs Airport

Interview date and time: August 22, 2015; 0705 MDT

The airport manager reported the visibility at 2 statute miles and the sky was “black” after the sun went down around 1930 local time.



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### Interview #1 Summary

**Robert Van Meter**  
Accident Pilot's Designated Pilot Examiner

Interview date and time: August 22, 2015; 1430 MDT

Mr. Van Meter stated that he administered the accident pilot's private pilot check ride. During the exam, the pilot deviated from his assigned course by approximately 7 nautical miles. Additionally, he incorrectly identified terrain features during the pilotage portion of the flight examination.