



## RECORD OF CONVERSATIONS

**Michael Huhn**  
**Air Safety Investigator**  
**Western Pacific Region**

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**Date: January 19 & 20, 2017**  
**Person Contacted: Mr. Ken Hetge (Hangar owner)**  
**NTSB Accident Number: WPR17FA055**

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### **Narrative:**

The following is a synopsis of the information provided by Mr. Hetge in several telephone conversations on the noted dates:

- Mr. Hetge is a mechanic and has an FBO at Tehachapi (TSP)
- The pilot rents a hangar from Mr. Hetge
- The pilot owned at least two airplanes:
  - The accident Mooney N6201N
  - A Grumman Yankee N9276L
- N9276L was purchased recently by the pilot, with money that he received in an insurance payout on the loss of his previous Yankee
  - That previous Yankee was destroyed in an accident in the summer of 2016 near Lone Pine CA
  - The Mooney pilot was the pilot in that accident as well
- The pilot kept the Yankee in the hangar, and tied down his Mooney outside (both at TSP)
- The pilot conducted all his own maintenance
  - However, he did not accomplish the recent engine overhaul in the Mooney
  - That was accomplished by Lycon in Visalia CA
- Mr. Hetge understood that the pilot came from an "aviation family"
  - His brother reportedly lived in Atlanta and was a pilot for Delta
  - His father was an ex USAF pilot
- He believed that the pilot also had a helicopter rating
- He did not know if the pilot had an instrument rating
- He spoke with the pilot on a very regular (almost daily) basis
  - Sometimes in person, sometimes over TSP CTAF (123.0)
- He spoke with the pilot the morning of the accident (Jan 12) on CTAF
- Mr. Hetge said the weather on that morning was "not good" around the time of the pilot's departure

- When asked to elaborate, he stated that:
  - He had to use his car windshield wipers
  - It was misty with light snow
  - The ceiling appeared to be very low
- He asked the pilot "how it looked" with regard to the weather and the pilot's planned departure
- The pilot reported that it would be "no problem," saying that his airplane windshield was wet but that he could see the "ridgeline" (and its windmills) to the east
  - This was a reference landmark pilots used to help determine visibility and ceiling
- The pilot departed on runway 29 and made a left downwind departure from the area
- Mr. Hetge understood that the pilot commuted regularly via airplane to work in the LA Basin, and that the only two airports he heard the pilot mention in this regard were Torrance (TOA) and Whiteman (WHP)
- The pilot was reportedly an electrical engineer who worked for a small firm, on a sidescan radar project
- He believed but was not certain the pilot was destined for TOA the morning of the accident
- The pilot used to own a CASA jet but reportedly donated it to a museum about 5 years ago
- He also owned and was building an RV-4 kitplane
- The weekend before the accident, Mr. Hetge saw the pilot and another airport hangar occupant (Mr. Lee Dodd) bringing the pilot's RV-4 kit to Mr. Dodd's hangar
  - Mr. Dodd also owned an RV-4 kit, and the two planned to build the two airplanes together
- Mr. Dodd was the one whose queries prompted the search for the pilot
  - The pilot's Jeep was parked in front of Mr. Dodd's hangar for several days, which was unusual
- Mr. Hetge was not certain where the pilot's flight logbooks or the airplane maintenance records were located