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Western Pacific Region

RECORD OF EMAIL

Date: May 16, 2018
Person Contacted: Mr. Michael Richards (NTSB AS30)
NTSB Accident Number: WPR18FA139

Narrative:

The following information regarding the weather surrounding the accident site was received in an email from NTSB Meteorologist: Michael Richards

There were several surface-based "unofficial" wx reporting stations within about 4 miles of the accident location, at elevations between about 3200' and 4300'. Note that siting of these equipment, maintenance standards and calibration are unknown.

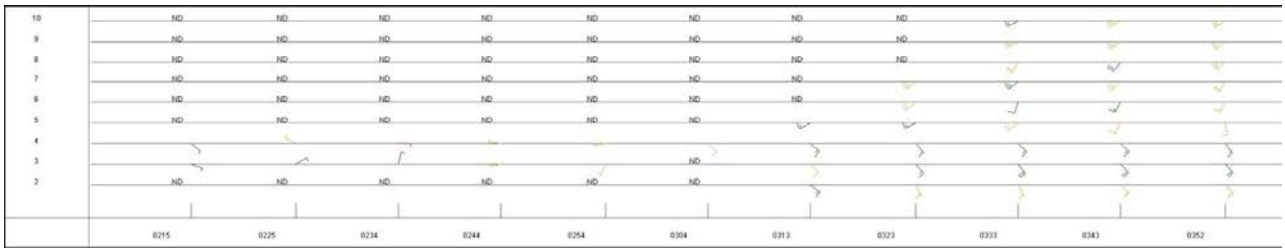
For the hour surrounding the accident time, one station about 3 miles upwind of the accident location at an elevation of 4284' reported sustained wind of about 3 knots or less from (generally) the west with gusts to 8 knots or less. However another station about 4 miles north-northwest of the accident location, at an elevation of 3242', reported sustained wind of up to 14 knots southwest to west-southwest with gusts to 19 knots.

The wind at Ramona Airport located about 19 miles west-southwest of the accident location at an elevation of about 1400' reported relatively light west-northwesterly to northwesterly surface winds during the period.

METAR KRNM 110153Z 26005KT 10SM CLR 18/13 A2984 RMK AO2 SLP096 T01830133=
METAR KRNM 110253Z 29007KT 10SM CLR 16/13 A2986 RMK AO2 SLP102 T01560128 53005=
METAR KRNM 110353Z AUTO 28004KT 10SM CLR 13/12 A2987 RMK AO2 SLP106 T01330122=

HRRR model data for the time period identified wind magnitudes near 6100' of about 35 knots from the west-southwest above the accident location. Notably, 6100' resided near the top of a temperature inversion present in the lower altitudes. The accident site also looked to be immediately downwind of terrain with tops to about 5500'.

Doppler winds applicable above a point located about 28 miles west-southwest of the accident location presented shifting wind magnitudes below 10000' during the time surrounding the accident time. The image below is from the KNKX VAD wind profile for the period, where the vertical-axis is thousands of feet and the horizontal-axis is time (UTC) on 11 May 2018. You may need to expand the picture but the times surrounding the accident time are toward the right-side of the figure. Horizontal wind at each thousand feet is represented by wind barbs. These are from direct Doppler measurements of the atmosphere from a ground-based weather radar.



There were no helpful PIREPs for wind.

There was an AIRMET active for moderate turbulence below 12000' for the accident region. This AIRMET had been issued at 1945 PDT.

The National Weather Service Area Forecast discussed gusty surface wind conditions for the mountains/deserts: "*…Gusty west winds through 08Z Friday from 15-25 mph gusting 35-45 mph…*" The highest surface winds were expected the day after the accident.