



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Timothy W. Monville
Sr. Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region

Date: November 4, 2014
Person Contacted: John Helms
NTSB Accident Number: ERA14FA464

Narrative:

Mr. John Helms, manager of Marion County Airport (X35) was contacted by phone on April 7, 2014, at 1751 EDT. He was called at [REDACTED]

He provided an e-mail address of [REDACTED]

He indicated that he does not know the missing pilot personally, but there may have been a brief introduction on April 5, 2014, at X35. He did not have direct communication with the pilot. On that date there was a Florida Sonex Association Bar-B-Q. He stated that Michael January, the president of the Florida Sonex Association was present, and members flew in for hot dogs and hamburgers.

He stated that N229P was at X35 on April 5, 2014, and his secretary has a picture of the airplane. He also stated that there is a picture of the pilot next to that airplane on the Florida Sonex web page. He indicated that the UNICOM at X35 is not recorded, and there is a security camera on the transient ramp.

On April 5, 2014, N229P was parked next to Michael January's hangar, and Mr. January would know about what time that airplane landed at X35. He provided a cell phone number for Mr. January of [REDACTED] and a home phone number of [REDACTED]

He stated that Mr. Weiss was in the airplane by himself, in the left seat, and was wearing a T-shirt with brown colored fishing hat, shorts, and tennis shoes. He indicated that the airplane had a global positioning system (GPS) receiver in it. After engine start while in the grass, the canopy popped open and the pilot secured the airplane, then exited it. Mr. January went over and informed the pilot that the canopy can get warped. The pilot said out loud it was "okay I forgot to latch it." Mr. January helped the pilot shut the canopy and get it latched. Mr. Helms watched the

engine restart, observed the pilot taxi out and perform an engine run-up, and watched the airplane depart from runway 28. He indicated that two people with cameras took pictures of the airplane while it was departing runway 28. He estimated the departure time between 1430 and 1500 hours on April 5, 2014. He reported the climb appeared normal, and the speed appeared okay. He observed the airplane make a crosswind turn to the South and leveled the wings then went out of view about five minutes later. He estimated the airplane flew between 1,000 and 1,500 feet mean sea level (MSL) while flying in a southerly direction.

He stated the pilot of another airplane (Kip Laurie) flying an orange colored Sonex performed a low approach over runway 28 after the missing pilot departed. Following the low approach, the pilot of the orange colored Sonex then turned and climb to the north.

The Civil Air Patrol (CAP)/Air Force Rescue Coordination Center (AFRCC) were involved in a search for the missing airplane, which was headed by Lt. Col. Eubanks.

He stated that when his wife arrived at X35, Mr. January's airplane and Mr. Ballenger's yellow jacket motor glider was still at the airport. He stated that most airplanes had departed at 1403, and watched the motor glider depart about 1430.

The airplane N229P was solid white with two-tone green stripe.

The digest was reviewed with him during the phone conversation and he agreed with the content.



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

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Sr. Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region

Date: November 4, 2014
Person Contacted: Michael January
NTSB Accident Number: ERA14FA464

Narrative:

Mr. Michael January was contacted by phone on April 7, 2014, at 1840 EDT. He was called at [REDACTED]

He provided an e-mail address of [REDACTED]

He stated that Mr. Weiss has been a personal friend of his for approximately 2 years. On April 5, 2014, Mr. Weiss attended a Bar-B-Q at X35 being held for Sonex members. The first airplane arrived there between 1030 and 1050 hours, and Mr. Weiss arrived at X35 between 1230 and 1300 hours; he was only there for a short time. After arrival he observed the pilot taxi in, and park the airplane in front of hangar A5. He greeted Mr. Weiss who signed in. He reported that the president and chief financial officer/general manager of Sonex was also at the fly in.

Between 1330 and 1400 hours, Mr. Weiss came to him and advised him that he was departing for Zephyrhills Municipal Airport (ZPH), and commented that it was good to see him and let's get together soon. He (Mr. January) became distracted, and he suddenly heard the engine start, and he walked towards the airplane, and started to marshal it on the ramp in front of hangar A5. The tail wheel was bogging down in the grass, and when the pilot throttled up, the canopy "violently" opened enough to bend the frame on the canopy, but did not rip loose. He (Mr. January) told the pilot to shut down the engine and check the canopy, but Mr. Weiss kept the engine running. Mr. Weiss tried to secure the canopy but it would not secure. Mr. January pushed down on the canopy and it went into the taxi latching position. Mr. January indicated that the canopy was tilted to the starboard side, and indicated that Mr. Weiss attempted to lock the canopy in the takeoff position, while Mr. January was pushing down however it would not go in the fully closed position. He told the pilot that the canopy needed to be inspected, as it was only in the taxi position. He informed the pilot the check canopy before takeoff, and if it does not secure before takeoff to come back and "we will fix it."

The last time he saw the airplane, the pilot moved the canopy to the full down lock position, then moved it back to the taxi position. Mr. January indicated that the canopy was secured to the right side of the airplane by screws and rivets to the longeron, and the canopy frame was aluminum. He indicated that the canopy appeared to be warped to the right.

Mr. Mr. January reported observing cracks in the canopy that were stopped drilled, but did not observe any new cracks as a result of the canopy coming open. He did indicate that the frame of the canopy appeared to be bent, but the frame of the longeron was not bent or cracked. Mr. January indicated that Mr. Weiss kept his airplane in good shape, and the tangs for the canopy latch were "okay." He did not know what seat Mr. Weiss was in when the canopy issue occurred.

He saw the pilot taxi out and he then went inside, and noted that three airplanes departed from runway 28. He walked inside, turned around, and thought he saw Mr. Weiss's airplane flying between 250 and 300 feet above ground level on a left crosswind direction. He reported the airplane was stable, and noted that Kip Laurie departed after Mr. Weiss departed. He reported that after Mr. Laurie departure from runway 28, he performed a low pass over runway 28 and departed to the north.

On April 5, 2014, at 1759 hours, he called Mr. Weiss's cell phone and reported it rang through; he left a message. On April 6, 2014, he did not hear from the pilot which was not unusual, and on April 7, 2014 at 1030 hours, he received a call from ZPH informing him that Mr. Weiss's airplane was not in his hangar. Lt. Col. Eubanks of the Air Force Rescue Coordination Center (AFRCC), did a search of the pilot cellular phone data, and also a search was performed of X35; the airplane was not at X35.

Mr. January provided a phone number for Kip Laurie of [REDACTED] or work phone number of [REDACTED], or cellular phone number of [REDACTED]. He also provided his email address of [REDACTED].

He reported that Mr. Weiss was a good pilot, and the Sonex will fly without the canopy. He reported that Mr. Weiss had been with the Florida Sonex Association for approximately 1.5 years, and reported there was nothing unusual with Mr. Weiss, but he did notice a bulge in his shirt consistent with the support that Mr. Weiss indicated he had cracks some ribs. He indicated that Mr. Weiss was positive and proud of his airplane, which was equipped with a Jabiru 2200 engine, and a fixed pitch propeller. Mr. Weiss was approximately 5 foot 4 inches, was of slender build, and weighed an estimated 135 to 140 pounds.

Mr. January did not perceive of the pilot being in a hurry to fly to ZPH, but he could tell he was embarrassed by the action of the canopy coming open. He reported that the pilot possibly had a Garmin 296 global positioning system (GPS) receiver onboard.

The digest was reviewed with him during the phone conversation and he agreed with the content.



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Timothy W. Monville
Sr. Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region

Date: November 5, 2014
Person Contacted: Kip D. Laurie
NTSB Accident Number: ERA14FA464

Narrative:

Mr. Kip Laurie contacted NTSB by phone on April 7, 2014, at 2018 EDT. He called from [REDACTED]

He provided an email address of [REDACTED] and stated his airplane, N [REDACTED] is a Sonex YX, which is based in Monroe, Georgia. He indicated that he does not know the pilot of N229P.

He stated that on April 5, 2014, while on the ramp in his airplane at X35 with his radio off, he recalled N229P taxiing out. He reported that the pilot of a cream colored YX airplane did a full stop landing and then remained on a taxiway. That pilot (Kirk Snader) was out of his airplane with the canopy open. He can be reached at [REDACTED] or an email address of [REDACTED] that pilot was not taking pictures.

He indicated that he wanted to leave X35 at 1400 hours, and estimated he departed between 1415 at 1430. After takeoff he did a quick abbreviated pattern flying of the downwind leg at 800 feet above ground level (AGL), base leg at 400 feet (AGL), followed by a low pass about 20 feet AGL over runway 28. Following the low pass over runway 28 he turned to the North and proceeded to Tifton Georgia. He estimated he was in the traffic pattern approximately 5 minutes.

He indicated that there was a kit fox airplane in the run-up area holding short waiting for his low pass.

The digest was reviewed with him during the phone conversation and he agreed with the content.



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Timothy W. Monville
Sr. Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region

Date: November 4, 2014
Person Contacted: John Helms
NTSB Accident Number: ERA14FA464

Narrative:

Mr. John Helms was contacted by phone on April 8, 2014, at 0950 EDT. He was called at [REDACTED]. On April 8, 2014 at 1040 hours, he checked his smartphone time versus the time he accessed the airport security gate and both times agreed.

He confirmed that the Unicom/Common Traffic Advisory Frequency (CTAF) of 122.8 MHz was not recorded and on the date and time of departure of N229P from X35, nobody was in the office listening to the frequency.

He provided the following timeline for April 5, 2014, using either sent text messages from his smart phone, or time of airport security gate access, coupled with information from his wife:

1126 hours – John Helms arrives at X35

1353-1358 – N229P estimated to depart X35 from runway 28. Turns to the south after takeoff. After N229P departs Kip Laurie begins taxiing to runway 28.

1359 hours – Kip Laurie's airplane was at runway 28 for the initial takeoff when John Helms sends text message to his wife. The first couple aircraft begin leaving, which was before N229P departed. John Helms on ramp talking with Jim Ballinger.

1400 hours - A raffle was scheduled to be held, however; it did not occur so Mr. January advised they would do something else.

1403 hours -His wife was at the gate entrance when she observed Kip Laurie turn to the north.

1410 hours - Airplanes started leaving X35. This was also the estimated time his wife arrived at his position on the ramp.

1500 hours - John Helms departs X35.

Mr. John Helms provided information for Detective Watts of the Marion County Sheriff's Office of [REDACTED]

The digest was reviewed with him during the phone conversation and he agreed with the content.



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Timothy W. Monville
Sr. Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region

Date: November 5, 2014
Person Contacted: Kirk Snader
NTSB Accident Number: ERA14FA464

Narrative:

Mr. Kirk Snader was contacted by phone on April 8, 2014 at 1204 EDT. He was called at [REDACTED]

He provided an email address of [REDACTED]

He indicated that he departed from runway 28, and returned and performed a full stop landing and secured his airplane on the taxiway. He indicated that he was on the taxiway because he was having a problem with his canopy. He stated that he only watched Kip Laurie depart, and did not see N229P depart. He estimated that he was working on his canopy approximately 60 seconds, and while working on it Kip Laurie departed and did the low pass, then turned to the North. Mr. Snader departed runway 28 and then proceeded to Winter Haven. He indicated his flight was quite east of ZPH.

The digest was reviewed with him during the phone conversation and he agreed with the content.



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Timothy W. Monville
Sr. Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region

Date: November 5, 2014
Person Contacted: Neil Coleman
NTSB Accident Number: ERA14FA464

Narrative:

Mr. Neil Coleman of ZPH Airport was contacted by phone on April 10, 2014, at 1039 EDT. The phone number was not recorded.

He stated that he flew on April 7, 2014, from ZPH to X35, flying 1 mile west of that track, flew between Dunnellon and Inverness, then flew from X35 to ZPH flying 1 mile east of the track looking for the missing airplane; there were negative results.

He provided a contact for the Civil Air Patrol of George Shaeffer of [REDACTED] and Willard Garman of [REDACTED]. He also provided phone number for Jim Wright of [REDACTED].

The digest was reviewed with him during the phone conversation and he agreed with the content.



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Timothy W. Monville
Sr. Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region

Date: November 5, 2014
Person Contacted: Daniel James Wright
NTSB Accident Number: ERA14FA464

Narrative:

Mr. Daniel James Wright was contacted by phone on April 10, 2014, at 1100 EDT. He was called at his cellular phone number of [REDACTED]

He provided an email address of [REDACTED] and stated that his airplane N [REDACTED] a Sonex is based at BKV. His airplane is yellow with the vertical black stripe, and also has a yellow bumblebee on both engine cowlings.

On April 5, 2014, he flew his airplane from BKV to X35, departing BKV at approximately 1115 EDT, and arriving at X35 approximately 18 to 20 minutes later. His airplane was on the grass side of the taxiway fairly well out on the south end of a lineup, and was next to Bob Adams airplane; his airplane was facing East.

He did not recall talking with Mr. Weiss, and indicated he did not know him personally.

His airplane was equipped with Enigma EFIS, which indicated his flight time from X35 to BKV was 21 minutes. When he started his engine for the intended flight from X35 to BKV he thought he was the third airplane to leave X35, and he only reported seeing one airplane depart before which was Tony Lewis.

He provided the following timeline:

- 1st airplane departed - Not sure of the registration
- 2nd airplane departed - Tony Lewis of Winter Haven
- 3rd airplane departed - Mr. Wright in N [REDACTED]

He departed from runway 27 at X35 at 1350 hours and maintained runway heading, climb to 1500 feet, then proceeded to BKV.

He believed that Mr. Weiss departed after he did, and did not recall hearing any issue about the canopy of N229P. He also did not hear any radio calls from the pilot of N229P, and reported the radio was quiet after he departed.

The digest was reviewed with him during the phone conversation and he agreed with the content.



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Timothy W. Monville
Sr. Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region

Date: November 5, 2014
Person Contacted: Michael January
NTSB Accident Number: ERA14FA464

Narrative:

Mr. Michael January was contacted by phone on April 10, 2014, at 1144 EDT. He was called at [REDACTED]

He stated that he had a dialogue with the general manager of the Sonex (Mark Schabel), and also talked with John Monet, who was the president and designer of Sonex. Mr. Monet was present at X35, and discussed previous canopy separation cases. Mr. Monet reported that the airplane is flyable, but not sure if everybody could handle the situation. Mr. Monet indicated that he personally was flying an airplane during racing, and had an issue with the canopy in flight. The wind blew his headset off, and pushed him back into the seat. He indicated that you would have to lean forward in order to fly the airplane.

By design, the safety pin of the canopy should fit in easily, and Mr. Weiss's airplane had the canopy safety pin as part of the equipment.

Mr. January indicated that the taxi tab (lower) was not part of the canopy original design; the original design only had fully locked position. He indicated that if the canopy frame was bent, and the frame was not flush in the front, a low pressure would exist and may cause the canopy to separate.

With respect to the canopy incident of N229P on April 5, 2014, Mr. Weiss did not secure the engine after the canopy came open. Mr. Weiss did get the canopy to go to the full down position; however, another pilot (Bob Adams) told Mr. January on April 9, 2014, that when he saw the canopy full down, it was above the windshield in the front. He did not watch N229P depart, and their photographer did not see that airplane taxi for takeoff.

The digest was reviewed with him during the phone conversation and he agreed with the content.



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Timothy W. Monville
Sr. Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region

Date: November 4, 2014
Person Contacted: Detective Jose Carreras
NTSB Accident Number: ERA14FA464

Narrative:

Detective Jose Carreras of the Citrus County Sheriff's Office contacted NTSB on April 10, 2014, at 1310 EDT. He called from [REDACTED]. He left a voice mail message and was called back the same day to the same phone number, but the time was not recorded.

During the call Detective Carreras stated that he was at an incident command post located at the Homosassa Fire Station, and in that location there were personnel representing the Citrus County Sheriff's Office, Marion County Sheriff's Office, Hernando County Sheriff's Office, Sumpter County Sheriff's Office, Lake County Sheriff's Office, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), Citrus County Fire Rescue, and Citizen Emergency Response Team. He indicated that there were greater than 100 people involved in a ground based search for the missing airplane, but he felt they were not looking in the correct area. He stated that personnel from the Civil Air Patrol (CAP) were not located at their Incident Command Post, and felt there may be miscommunication among the agencies and the CAP because they were not located at the Incident Command Post. He also expressed frustration on the part of law enforcement about not being in the loop with Air Force Rescue Coordination Center (AFRCC), and the person looking at radar (John Henderson).

I relayed to him that I would contact the person from CAP, and would pass along his phone number, and put them in touch.

The digest was reviewed with him during the phone conversation and he agreed with the content.



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Timothy W. Monville
Sr. Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region

Date: November 5, 2014
Person Contacted: Willard Garman
NTSB Accident Number: ERA14FA464

Narrative:

Mr. Willard Garman was contacted by phone on April 10, 2014, at 1344 EDT. He was called at [REDACTED]

He stated that he was the Civil Air Patrol (CAP) incident commander, and is physically located in Bradenton Florida. He indicated that the Air Force Rescue Coordination Center (AFRCC) was sending a video of Tampa radar, and he just got off the phone with AFRCC about the radar. He indicated that he needed Hernando County Sheriff Department to get involved in a search for the missing airplane.

I informed him that Hernando County was one of six state entities at an incident command post in Homosassa Florida, and asked him if it was okay if I gave his cellular number to personnel located at that incident command post; he said okay.

The digest was reviewed with him during the phone conversation and he agreed with the content.



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Timothy W. Monville
Sr. Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region

Date: November 5, 2014
Person Contacted: Willard Garman
NTSB Accident Number: ERA14FA464

Narrative:

Mr. Willard Garman was contacted by phone on April 17, 2014, at 1344 EDT. He was called at [REDACTED]

He provided an email address of [REDACTED] and stated that the Civil Air Patrol was notified at 1300 hours on April 7, 2014, and he was the Civil Air Patrol (CAP) incident commander from April 7 to April 11, 2014. On the afternoon of April 11th, he turned over the incident command to George Schaefer, who can be reached at [REDACTED] or an email address of [REDACTED]

He indicated that the search has not yet been officially called off, and Tampa radar indicated the missing airplane departed X35 at 1357. He indicated that a radar target was tracked departing X35, and proceeding in a south-southwest direction where the last radar target was located at 28 degrees 48.304 minutes North latitude and 082 degrees 25.254 minutes West longitude, or approximately 15.5 nm and 188 degrees from X35. The target was in a 200 foot-per-minute descent, and an airplane flying in that same area would be lost from radar at 1000 feet.

He indicated that the Hernando County Sheriff Department was involved in a search for the missing airplane, and that a Civil Air Patrol (CAP) aircraft picked up a weak emergency locator transmitter (ELT) signal on 121.5 MHz on April 12, 2014. Using direction finding (DF) equipment the signal was traced to 28 degrees 36 minutes 17.62 seconds North latitude and 082 degrees 35 minutes 47.85 seconds West longitude. That location consisted of a heavy wooded area with alligators and water moccasins present. That location was searched, and bulldozers were utilized however the water was waist deep. That location when plotted was located 2.82 nautical miles and 275.5 degrees from the Weeki Wachee High School.

Also, on April 12, 2014, two citizens reported seeing an airplane flying southbound over US 19, which was southwest of the ELT signal location, and noted the airplane made a hard right turn. During their search they flew direct from X35 to ZPH, and also X35 to BKV, but did not spot the missing airplane.

The digest was reviewed with him during the phone conversation and he agreed with the content.



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Timothy W. Monville
Sr. Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region

Date: March 14, 2016
Person Contacted: Interview at Marion County Sheriff's Office
NTSB Accident Number: ERA14FA464

Narrative:

On October 23, 2014, about 0827 EDT, an interview was performed at the Marion County Sheriff's Office located at 692 NW 30th Avenue, Ocala, Florida 34475.

Present were Tim Monville (NTSB), Lt. Donnie Winston and Lt. D. McFatten (Marion County Sheriff's Office), Brian Weiss (pilot's son), and Doug Turnbull.

The group was informed how and when NTSB was notified of the missing airplane, and that several conversations took place between NTSB, John Helms, manager of the Marion County Airport, and Mike January, the person who had seen his father before his flight departed. The group was also informed that during the search process, the NTSB attempted to put personnel from the various law enforcement agencies in touch with the Incident Commander of the Civil Air Patrol, because of miscommunication issues. I relayed that I contacted the incident commander of the Civil Air Patrol and put him in touch with the various entities.

Mr. Weiss advised that in the last 5 to 6 years his father had owned several airplanes, or a total of 8 aircraft. His father started flying in 1960, and as of 2008, had accumulated 1,700 flight hours. He estimated his father had "well over 2,000 hours"; he found 5 or 6 pilot logbooks; however, his father's most current pilot logbook was not located. With respect to his father's flying habits, he routinely flew at 800 feet.

Mr. Weiss provided a mailing address of [REDACTED] Victor, New York [REDACTED]. He also relayed in response to a comment that an I-pad bracket or holder was found in the wreckage but no I-pad was found; he found it at another location. As of yet, he has not found the maintenance records or his father's current pilot logbook, but stated he found previous pilot logbooks.

With respect to his father's health, he indicated that his father had diabetes pain, and had cracked a few ribs in September 2013, when he slipped on ice. He indicated that his father took Ibuprofen and blood pressure medication. He last spoke with his father on April 4, 2014, and during that conversation asked his father what was going on. His father relayed to him that he would be attending a fly-in luncheon the next day, and he seemed to be in good spirits.

On April 8, 2014, Brian Weiss found out his father was missing.

The personnel from the Marion County Sheriff's Office indicated that a person walking in the area spotted the wreckage and reported it to law enforcement. Once on-scene, the wreckage was uprighted to facilitate recovery of the body. The personnel also indicated that FAA inspector Cory Best took possession of a Garmin GPS receiver that was found 25 feet from the main wreckage. They indicated the property is State owned by Greenways, and the contact there is Chris McKendry who can be reached at [REDACTED] or Willie at [REDACTED]. The medical examiner performing the autopsy is from the District V Medical Examiner's Office, located at [REDACTED] Leesburg, Florida. The phone number is [REDACTED] and the facsimile is [REDACTED]. The investigator is Todd Bronson.

The digest was e-mailed to Brian Weiss for review on November 4, 2014, about 1032 EST, and he replied the same day at 2143 EST, with, "Tim, I have found a brief description of a draft that my dad had modified with changes he may have made to the aircraft in question (N229P). It's dated April 2013, it has Tach and SMOH time written in. This may be a draft in which he may entered into his maintenance log @ some point. It looks to be an Annual inspection report."