

LARIMER COUNTY SHERIFFS OFFICE

Narrative

Initial Information

On 022717, I received a request from Sergeant HEFFERNAN to respond to the area of County Road 2 and County Road 23 where there was a report of a plane that had crashed into a lake. I responded to the area and met with Deputy MARK HECKER. In speaking with Deputy HECKER and other individuals in the area, I learned that at approximately 0743 hours the Larimer County Sheriff's Office received a report of a plane crash in this area. Emergency medical personnel responded to the scene and located a plane in shallow water. The Larimer County Dive Rescue Team entered the water and after cutting some seat belts, withdrew two males from the plane who had been under water for approximately fifty minutes. Both males were transported via ambulance to the Medical Center of the Rockies and were later pronounced deceased. These two individuals were later turned over to the Larimer County Coroner's Office and an autopsy was performed on this date at 1400 hours. Refer to Sergeant BRIAN WANGLER's report, as I had asked him to take photographs during these autopsies. The autopsy report will be attached to this report when it is received.

I took over as lead investigator for the plane crash scene. I learned that the two victims were identified as PATRICK BLANKEMEIR, DOB: [REDACTED], and through the assistance of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) the other party was identified as JAMES PATRICK GRIFFITH, DOB: [REDACTED]. I was informed that the plane was owned by Mcair Aviation out of Broomfield and the owner was en route to the crash scene. The owner was later identified as JOHN WILTFANG who was part-owner of this airplane.

Through several phone calls, I learned that National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) Investigator TODD FOX was flying in from Chicago that afternoon to take over the plane crash investigation. In addition, the FAA was sending Inspectors PHIL POTTER and BRET PROUD to assist with the investigation. I coordinated with these three individuals as to where the plane would be taken to and provided them information that they needed for me to assist with their investigation.

My point of contact with Beegles was ED SCHUMACHER who works for the company that does all the downed plane recoveries in the state of Colorado. I asked Deputy DAVID NOE, who was the evidence technician on scene, to take multiple photographs of the downed airplane and to also take photographs as the airplane was being recovered out of the water and placed onto the flatbed. Refer to Deputy NOE's supplemental report and the attached photographs for additional information.

Contact with JOHN WILTFANG

When JOHN WILTFANG arrived on scene, I asked him some general information about the aircraft. He confirmed that the aircraft with tail number N2461N was his plane and owned by Mcair Aviation. He stated that the two individuals who were inside the plane were on a training run. He said PAT BLANKEMEIR was the Certified Flight Instructor Instructor (CFII) who was training JAMES GRIFFITH, who had already received his commercial license but was in the process of obtaining his Certified Flight Instructor (CFI) status. JOHN stated that because JAMES was working on his CFI, today was the day that he had to do some spins. He stated that per the flight manifest, they were supposed to take off at 0630 hours and fly up into this area. They were going to induce the plane to perform maneuvers that the plane doesn't necessarily want to do to ensure JAMES could recover from those situations. JOHN informed me that the plane took off from Rocky Mountain Metropolitan Airport.

Coordinates

I was asked by TODD FOX to obtain the coordinates of the location of the airplane as it sat in the water. I learned the following information from the dive team. This is on DATUM WGS84. The location of the tail was N 40 degrees, 16.038 feet by W 105 degrees, 09.253 feet. The nose of the plane was located at N 40 degrees, 16.032 feet by W 105 degrees, 09.250 feet. I was informed that there was debris from the airplane located slightly north of the airplane as it sat in the water and that debris was marked at N 40 degrees, 16.046 feet by W 105 degrees, 09.245 feet. A shoe was located separate from the plane and that location was N 40 degrees, 16.023 feet by W 105 degrees, 09.258 feet. In addition, a glove was also located apart from the plane at N 40 degrees, 15.997 feet by W 105 degrees, 09.302 feet. These measurements were taken with a Garmin Montana GPS.

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Plane Recovery

Beegles required the assistance of a rotator from Reliable Towing out of Longmont to pull the plane out of the water. The initial plan was to float the plane and drag it across the lake to the boat ramp; however, it was later discovered that the lake was only five feet deep in the middle and the plane would not be able to be dragged across this point. Therefore, it was decided to lift the plane out of the water with the use of the rotator truck. Beegles, with the assistance of Reliable Towing, removed the plane out of the water and placed in on the ground. Beegles prepared the plane for transport by removing the wings. It was later placed on a flatbed trailer with the assistance of Reliable Towing and transported to Greeley.

Contact with LORI OAKLEY

I received information from the owner of the property that a woman had witnessed the entire crash. Through several phone calls I identified this woman as LORI OAKLEY. I called her on the phone and recorded this phone call. I later downloaded the phone call onto a disc, which is logged into evidence. For information on what was exactly said during this phone call, refer to the phone call itself; a synopsis follows.

LORI informed me that she was outside of her house feeding her horses. She looked up and noticed a plane flying overhead. She mentioned that there are a lot of stunt planes who fly in the area. She mentioned her dislike when they cut their engines off after doing a steep climb. She thought that was what this plane was doing. She stated the plane flew by and then saw the plane gain elevation and then turned so that it was nose down and the plane spun slowly towards the ground. She stated there is a huge field next to the reservoir. She was yelling "pull it up" because then they could have landed in the field. The plane slowly spun and she lost sight of it behind the trees. She mentioned some of her neighbors fly plans and feared that this plane belonged to one of her friends, specifically BILL COOPER. She was able to reach COOPER and spoke with him about this. He told her that the only way this type of plane would spin like that was if you make it. LORI stated she believes the plane spun or rotated five times before it hit the ground. She said as soon as the nose was pointing towards the ground, the engine sounded like it stopped as she could not hear the plane anymore. She added that as close has she was, she should have definitely heard the plane's engine. She stated that she knew the plane hit the ground as it continued to rotate before disappearing underneath the trees.

Tips

I contacted the Public Information Officer (PIO) with the Larimer County Sheriff's Office and asked him to put out a press release asking that anyone who had seen this plane to contact me at the Larimer County Sheriff's Office so that I might be able to speak with them about this incident. I later learned that I received several phone calls regarding the possible sighting of this plane and will document these contacts in a later report.

Attachments

None

END OF SUPPLEMENTAL REPORT

LARIMER COUNTY SHERIFFS OFFICE

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Attachments

Initial Information

On 022717, at approximately 0747 hours, I was dispatched to the report of a possible plane crash that occurred near the intersection of County Road 2 and County Road 23E, Berthoud. The dispatched information indicated that a plane had crashed into a small body of water and was submerged under water. By checking a map, we found that Culver Reservoir was located just north of County Road 2 on County Road 23E. I responded to this location using my marked patrol vehicle's red and blue lights and siren.

Locating Accident Site

When I arrived in the area, I looked over the reservoir and initially I did not see the plane. I then saw the tail fin of the pane sticking out of the water on the very east side of the reservoir. I took Hoot Owl Drive east of County Road 23E and went up the driveway of 4480 Hoot Owl Drive. I arrived at approximately the same time as fire and medical personnel. I found that this property backed to Culver Reservoir and the location of the plane crash.

Observations of Scene

When I arrived, I saw a small white airplane in the water approximately 20 to 25 yards away from the shore. The plane was mostly submerged with only the tail fin, the tops of the wings and a small area above the cockpit showing above the water.

Firefighters had begun rescue efforts and had rescue swimmers in the water.

Information from DAVID KLEIN

Responders on the scene identified DAVID KLEIN, DOB: [REDACTED], as a person who had called 911. I contacted DAVID and in response to my questions he told me the following:

DAVID did not see the plane crash. He lives on the property just to the north of the property I was on ([REDACTED]), which was later identified as [REDACTED]. His property is also adjacent to Culver Reservoir and is separated from [REDACTED] by a fence.

DAVID stated his step-son, later identified as STACEY "BUCK" PERRIN, DOB: [REDACTED], lives in a cabin on his property. DAVID stated he heard what he now believed to be the crash while he was in his house. He said he heard a thud outside but did not think anything of it. He stated shortly after this, BUCK called him to tell him there had been a plane crash. DAVID went outside and saw the plane was indeed in the water. He had been looking to see if anyone would come out of the airplane but no one did. He stated he then called 911.

Information from STACEY "BUCK" PERRIN

BUCK came outside and I spoke with him on two occasions. In response to my questions, he told me the following.

He lives in a small cabin on his step-father's property. This morning he came outside as he often does in the morning to go for a walk and get some fresh air. He stated he was walking outside of his cabin in a location which was to the north of a small grove of evergreen trees next to the lake. He heard a noise and looked up and saw the airplane in a nose-dive. He described the plane as being approximately 200 to 300 feet off the ground pointed directly towards the ground and spinning and it flew downwards. He stated he was surprised that the plane was not moving as quickly as he would have expected it to when it was in a nose-dive or crashing. He lost sight of the plane when it went behind the evergreen trees. He ran around the trees and saw the plane was in the water. He called his step-father and the two later called 911.

BUCK estimated the time he saw the plane crash as being 0740 hours. He stated at the time of the crash, he saw no one else outside and no aircraft other than the plane which crashed.

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Both BUCK and DAVID told me that they often have airplanes flying at low altitudes in this area. They stated this was an area which had been designated as an area for airplane pilots to do acrobatics or training.

Information from KATHY KLEIN

I spoke with KATHLEEN KLEIN, DOB: [REDACTED] who is DAVID's wife and lives at [REDACTED]. She also heard the plane crash when in the house. She came outside with her camera and began taking pictures of the plane in the water. She also said she saw no one else around and no other aircraft when she came outside. She retrieved her camera and began taking pictures of the airplane and the surrounding area. She said she would provide me these pictures to me later when she could download them from her camera. I provided her with my business card to contact me when the pictures were ready.

Voluntarily Written Statement from BUCK PERRIN

BUCK provided a written statement. I reviewed his statement and found it similar in content to the verbal statement he had already provided to me. I later noted that he had not written his name on the top of the form so I added using the name he had provided to me verbally. This statement was provided to Investigator DREW WEBER at his request.

Deputy Involvement

After providing the written statement to Investigator WEBER, I did not have any further involvement in this case. ,See other deputies reports for further information.

Attachments

None

END OF SUPPLEMENTAL

Approximately 7:40 am on 2/27/17 I was at my desk in my home. I heard a plane that sounded like the planes which are always doing aerobatics over Rabbit Mountain. The engine roared, then subsided. I looked out of the window over my desk and saw a light colored small plane going toward the ground nose first. It was spinning slowly but I did not see any smoke or fire. The plane went down behind some trees so I did not see it hit the ground but I heard a 'boom' from in my house with the windows closed. At that time I called 911.

Bruce A. Connally DVM, MS

[REDACTED]

Berthoud, CO 80513

[REDACTED]

LARIMER COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE
VOLUNTARILY WRITTEN STATEMENT

CRIMINAL
JUSTICE

I, (Stacey "Buck" Perrin) make the following voluntary statement to
Deputy Schall, and Deputy _____
who have identified themselves as officers of the Larimer County Sheriff's Office, Fort Collins, Colorado.

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Date of Birth	Age	Sex	Height	Weight	Hair	Eyes	Eyes
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
Home Address			City/State/Zip		Area Code + Phone		
[REDACTED]			Berthoud		Co. 80513		
Work Address			City/State/Zip		Area Code + Phone		
[REDACTED]			[REDACTED]		[REDACTED]		

I WAS out for a Morning Walk. It was
Approx 7:40 A.M. I was looking AT THE
Mountains + sky + happened to GLANCE to my
Left which was the S.E. corner of THE
LAKE. - IN THE SKY MAYBE 200' up I SAW a
Small plane fly straight down nose dive
into the lake. call the folks and then 911.

I have read the above and foregoing statement and know the contents thereof and certify that the same is true and I am signing it voluntarily of my own free will.

[Signature]

Witness

2-27-17

Date

LARIMER COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE
VOLUNTARILY WRITTEN STATEMENT

Case # 17-1620
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Kathy Klein make the following voluntary statement to
Deputy M. HECKER and Deputy _____
who have identified themselves as officers of the Larimer County Sheriff's Office, Fort Collins, Colorado.

Date of Birth	Age	Sex	Height	Weight	Hair	Eyes	Eyes
[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]
Home Address					City/State/Zip	Area Code + Phone	
[Redacted]					<u>Berthoud</u>	<u>107</u>	[Redacted]
Work Address					City/State/Zip	Area Code + Phone	
[Redacted]							

Upstairs in my bedroom, around 7:40 a.m.
 Heard a strange dull thud - 1st thought was something
 hit our house. I ran to the sliding glass door opened it
 seconds after the thud maybe 3 seconds my phone (cell) rang in
 my hand, it was my son "Buck", he simply stated "Mom,
 a plane just crashed into the lake" he stated he saw it.
 I yelled to my husband David to call 911. I would have
 called but hadn't used my inhaler for asthma

David called 911 immediately. Started the car & we headed
 for the lake. I take my camera & big lens as I always
 do here on ranch.

Started taking pics within 5-8 min of crash maybe
 hoping they would somehow be useful for investigation.

I have read the above and foregoing statement and know the contents thereof and certify that the same is true and I am signing it voluntarily of my own free will.

[Signature]

 Signature

 Witness

2-27-17

 Date

 Witness

CRIMINAL JUSTICE

LARIMER COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE
VOLUNTARILY WRITTEN STATEMENT

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I, David Klein make the following voluntary statement to
Deputy M. HECKER, and Deputy _____
who have identified themselves as officers of the Larimer County Sheriff's Office, Fort Collins, Colorado.

Date of Birth	Age	Sex	Height	Weight	Hair	Eyes	Eyes
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
Home Address					City/State/Zip	Area Code + Phone	
[REDACTED]					Berthoud CO 80513	[REDACTED]	
Work Address					City/State/Zip	Area Code + Phone	
[REDACTED]							

I was in my kitchen, heard a thud. Thought nothing of it. A minute later my wife said my son who was near the lake saw a plane crash

One minute later my son called me and after he told me what he saw I called 911.

We went to the lake immediately after the call to 911 and there was a white plane partially submerged in the lake

We then directed emergency personnel to the site

I have read the above and foregoing statement and know the contents thereof and certify that the same is true and I am signing it voluntarily of my own free will.

[REDACTED]
Signature
[REDACTED]
Witness

2/27/17
Date

Witness