

SURVIVAL FACTORS

SPECIALIST'S FACTUAL REPORT

March 23, 2016

I. ACCIDENT

Airplane : Fontuna Sonex [N229P]
Location : Dunnellon, FL¹
Date : April 5, 2014
Time : 1359 eastern daylight time²
NTSB # : ERA14FA464

II. SURVIVAL FACTORS SPECIALIST

Specialist : Pete Wentz
National Transportation Safety Board
Washington, DC

III. SUMMARY

On April 5, 2014, a Fortuna Sonex, N229P, did not arrive at its intended destination and was reported overdue/missing on April 7, 2014. On October 19, 2014 the airplane was located about 2 nautical miles south of Marion County airport(X35). A private pilot was on board and was fatally injured. The airplane was registered to and operated by a private individual under the provisions of 14 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 91 as a personal flight. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed in the area at the time and a flight plan was not filed. The flight originated about 1357³ eastern daylight time from Marion County Airport, Dunnellon, Florida, and was destined for Zephyrhills Municipal Airport (ZPH), Zephyrhills, Florida. An emergency locator beacon signal had not been reported.

¹ Accident airplane was located about 2 nautical miles south of Marion County airport (X35).

² Estimated time calculated from a Garmin GPSMAP 396 onboard the accident airplane.

³ Estimated time calculated from a Garmin GPSMAP 396 onboard the accident airplane.

IV. DETAILS OF THE INVESTIGATION

The Survival Factors specialist conducted an investigation from the National Transportation Safety Board's Office of Aviation Safety (AS-60) in Washington, DC with documentation provided by the IIC. On April 7, 2014 a ground and air search commenced consisting of the Florida Civil Air Patrol (CAP), Citrus County Sheriff, Citrus County Fire Rescue, Marion County Sheriff, Marion County Fire and Special Operations, Hernando County Sheriff, Sumpter County Sheriff, Lake County Sheriff, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and a Citizen Emergency Response Team. The US Air Force Rescue Coordination Center provided video of the Tampa area radar. Two incident command (IC) centers were stood up for the event: Citrus County Sheriff's IC was located at the Homosassa fire station and the CAP IC was located in Bradenton, FL.

1.0 Search and Rescue

The accident airplane was reported to depart Marion County Airport (photograph 1) about 1357 eastern standard time on April 5, 2014. Personnel at X35 reported observing the airplane depart the runway, momentarily lost sight due to obstructions and then noted the airplane proceeding in a southerly direction. The individual lost sight of the airplane as it continued south. The airplane was reported overdue/missing on April 7, 2014. Civil Air Patrol along with local law enforcement agencies from surrounding counties established a search upon notification of the missing airplane.



Photograph 1 – Marion County Airport (X35).

1.1 Marion County

Marion County fire rescue conducted a ground search (diagram 1) to the southwest of X35.

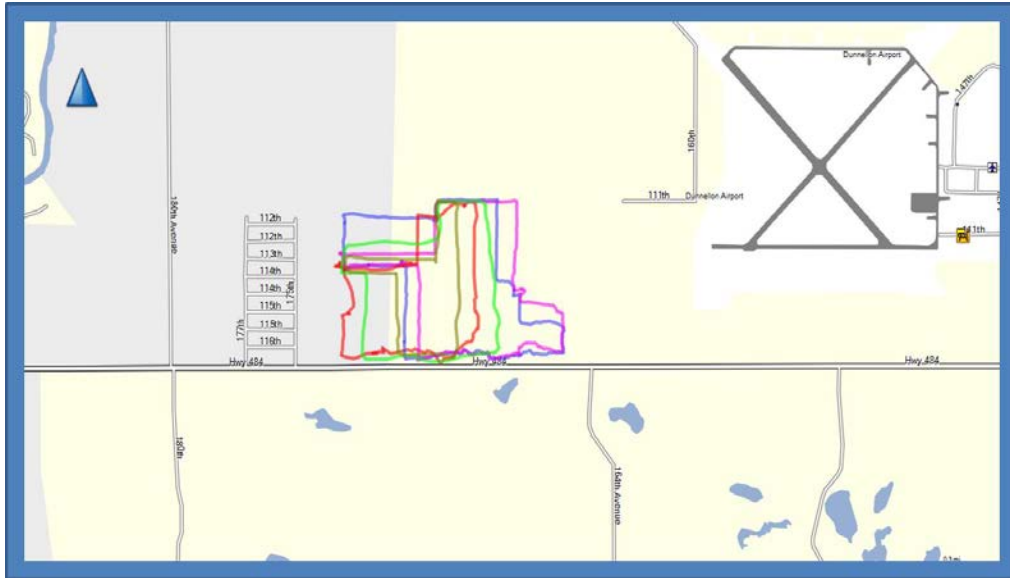


Diagram 1 – Marion County fire rescue ground search path.

Marion County special operations conducted an air search to the south of X35 from the easterly to the westerly direction (diagram 2).



Diagram 2 – Marion County special operations flight path.

1.2 Citrus County

Citrus County conducted multiple searches around the Sugarmill Woods, FL area (diagram 3). These searches were established from a radio ping picked up from the CAP.

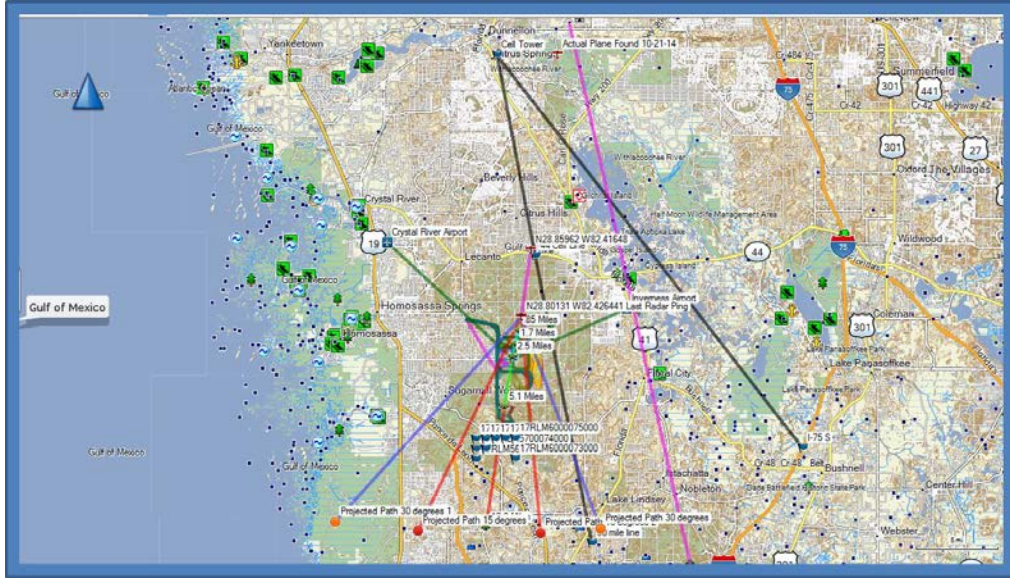
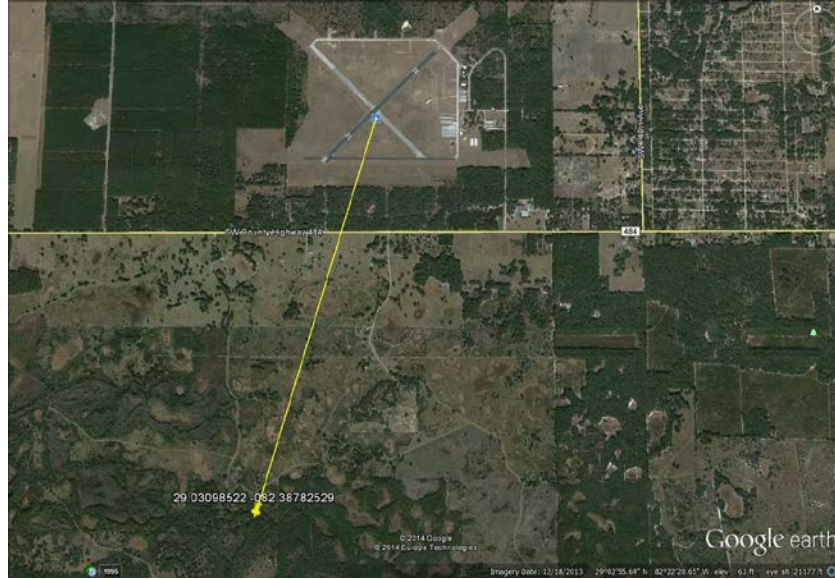


Diagram 3 – Citrus County fire rescue search paths.

1.3 Accident Site

The accident airplane was located on October 19, 2014 by a person walking in the woods (photograph 2). The accident airplane was found inverted between trees about 2 nautical miles south of X35 (photograph 3). An Ameri-King AK-450 series emergency locator transmitter (ELT) was located at the accident site. The mounting bracket holding the ELT in place failed to retain the ELT in its bracket during the accident sequence. Additionally the ELT switch was found in the “Off” position.



Photograph 2 – Accident airplane location.



Photograph 3 – Accident airplane.

1.4 Civil Air Patrol Lessons Learned

The Survival Factors specialist contacted the Florida CAP IC. He stated that after the accident the Florida CAP established the following protocols to improve the search for missing aircraft in the Florida area.

- Initiate calls to the local law enforcement agency (sheriff's office) with current information of the lost aircraft.
- Provide local law enforcement agency's (sheriff's office) any cell phone forensic information the CAP has received.
- Establish communication between the CAP and each county's sheriff's office to ask how the CAP can assist in air rescues for that local agency.

The Florida CAP IC and an aviation officer from the Marion County Sheriff's office met after the Fontana Sonex aircraft (ERA14FA464) was found. The two agencies established protocols to better enhance the communications between their respective agencies. The Florida CAP IC stated that in a recent event the communications had greatly improved which allowed the CAP and local law enforcement to work together in the SAR.

Pete Wentz
Survival Factors Investigator