

Steve O'Berg
Flight & Crash Report
June 27, 2015
Cameron Air Show

From:
F. Chris Christman II
[REDACTED]
Mt. Moriah, MO 64481
[REDACTED]

July 25, 2015

Attn: Jim Sillinan

Dear Jim,

I am enclosing this letter to document my experiences with Pilot, Steve O'Berg, on June 27, 2015 at the Cameron Air Show. As I told you in our phone conversation Friday July 26, 2015. I was Steve's first passenger flight of the day. Along with the video I shot, I included several still photos you might find useful in your investigation. The reason for the still photos is twofold, first to help establish a time line via the photo time stamp. Second and perhaps more important is to show Steve's health and state of mind on the day he crashed and died. The Photo's & Video's are camera numbered & Time stamped.

The first still photo # 100_2035 is of Steve doing the pre-flight check. He did not know I took this photo. He had met me & my girlfriend earlier on the entrance road to the Air Show. We were early & had moved away from the airport to smoke a cigarette. He pulled up in his truck and said with a big smile: "Hi Chris, I'm Steve. I'm down at the end hanger. I've got to do my pre-flight check, so take your time. Just come on up to the hanger after when your ready." I'd never met him before only talked on the phone. So I have no idea how he knew who I was. My girlfriend said: "A pilot can always recognize another pilot."

The next set of still photo's are just shots I took of the airplane when Steve went back to his truck for a tool. # 100_2036 is front cockpit. # 100_2037 is rear cockpit. Photo's # 100_2042 to # 100_2047 are left, front, right views of the airplane.

The still photo # 100_2051 was taken by Steve's wife, Karri O'Berg right after we landed. It is one of 3 she took. It was his idea to take the photo, I hadn't thought of it. I was still so exhilarated from my awesome flight. I never stopped grinning until he crashed 4 hours later.

The first video # 100_2048 is part of my flight with Steve, 5:11 in length @ 9:32 AM. It starts with us idling on the runway. It's hard to hear what we are saying over the sound of the engine. And I don't think it really matters to you what we are saying. Other then the sound of the engine when he runs it up to full power then back down before taking off (my camera is centered on the manifold pressure gauge, because as a lifelong mechanic and amateur pilot, I'm very aware of how important manifold pressure is.) and the flight characteristics of the Pitts S-2B, there is one very important part. I briefly turn the camera around for a shot of Steve. His actions & the look on his face show how focused he was @ 0:21. He only smiled because I told him on the intercom to smile for the camera @ 0:23. During the entire flight his head was in almost constant motion, looking in every direction. He was always very aware of where the plane was in relation to the ground and other possible airplanes.

I wish the video showed my entire flight. But after he says: "we have to make sure your wife sees us" and he painted a heart in the sky with smoke for my girlfriend, he asked me how I liked flying inverted? My reply was: "I LOVE it". He said how about we do a "Hammerhead". I accidentally turned off the camera because I was focused on enjoying the flight...

The second video # 100_2049 is only 1 second. I think I pushed the power button right before

landing. It's time stamped, 9:44 AM. With the still photo of Steve and me after landing being time stamped, 9:47 AM. That gives you a complete Time line of my flight.

The third video # 100_2092 Time Stamped, 1:50 PM, is of Steve's Air Show performance and of course the crash. In the audio you can hear the announcer giving her speel. And of course me giving my description and telling my friends that the maneuver he was doing is one that he & I had done earlier "Hell yes. OMG, yeah". Then when he goes into the fatal spin I'm saying, "No, no, no Steve. Oh [REDACTED]."

The IMPORTANT thing that I saw when watching this video LATER is: @ 5:31 there is a bright flash from the engine. THE AIRPLANE IMMEDIATLY LOSES POWER. And he goes into the tumble. From which he tried to recover using stick & rudder, while trying to restart the engine. It appears the engine fires, then sputters. And he tries to pull up, but there just wasn't enough air space or time.

I know this rambles on a bit, but I didn't want to leave out any of my impressions as a witness that might help in the investigation. Let me know if there is anything more I can do.

Respectfully,

Chris Christman II