



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Timothy N. Sorensen
Aviation Accident Investigator
Central Region

Date: November 28, 2011
Person Contacted: Mr. Donald Behrens
NTSB Accident Number: CEN12FA083 – Crystal Lake, IL

Narrative:

Mr. Behrens reported that he was just north of the site at the time of the accident. He heard an airplane that sounded like it was doing aerobatics directly above them. He was unable to see the airplane because of the overcast clouds. He noted that he heard the airplane three times over about a one minute time interval. He added that it did not sound as if the airplane was trying to glide, but maybe trying to climb.

Mr. Behrens went inside for less than one minute and when he came back outside he observed the airplane descending toward the ground in an approximate 70° nose down attitude. It might have been in a slight right bank, and it appeared to have been on a generally north heading. The airplane subsequently hit the ground "and debris went everywhere." He did not see any fire.

Mr. Behrens noted that there was a white stream behind the airplane; maybe a trail of smoke. The white stream was about as long as the height of the tree the airplane impacted. He also heard a "hissing" sound similar to a gas line or a pressurized tank. He did not recall seeing a parachute until impact. He saw the parachute when he responded to the accident site. When he first arrived at the site, there was a slight fuel smell at first, but then it was gone.

Mr. Behrens reported that it was cloudy, with rain and mist. He added that he could see the bases of the radio towers at the college, which were about 3/4 of a mile southeast of his location. However, he couldn't see the red light on the top of the towers.

----- End of entries -----



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Timothy N. Sorensen
Aviation Accident Investigator
Central Region

Date: November 28, 2011
Person Contacted: Mr. Darren Smith
NTSB Accident Number: CEN12FA083 – Crystal Lake, IL

Narrative:

Mr. Smith reported that he was at a farm near the accident site when he heard an airplane. He stated that it sounded like it was doing aerobatic stunts; however, he couldn't see the airplane because of the low cloud cover. He noted that it initially sounded as if the airplane heading south. He estimated the cloud ceiling at 1,200 to 1,500 feet, with about 1/2 mile visibility in light rain and mist.

Mr. Smith stated that approximately one minute after they first heard the airplane, he looked across a field and observed it come out of the clouds in a 60° to 70° nose down attitude. He commented that he saw about the last three seconds of the flight. He recalled hearing the engine and did not observe any fire, either before or after impact. He also saw trails of white smoke at impact; although, he was unsure about the presence of white smoke prior to that.

Mr. Smith responded to the accident site and recalled a faint fuel smell.

----- End of entries -----



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Timothy N. Sorensen
Aviation Accident Investigator
Central Region

Date: November 28, 2011
Person Contacted: Ms. Stephanie Olson
NTSB Accident Number: CEN12FA083 – Crystal Lake, IL

Narrative:

Ms. Olson reported that she was driving on Route 14 in the direction of Woodstock at about 45 miles per hour. She initially noticed the airplane out of the corner of her eye. It was descending rapidly; more steeply than airplanes normally descend to land. She estimated that it was in a 45° nose down attitude, the wings were level, and the flight path appeared steady. The airplane appeared intact. She did not recall seeing a parachute while the airplane was in-flight.

Ms. Olson stated she did not see the impact because a house interfered with her line of sight. She parked her car and responded to the accident site. She did not recall seeing any smoke either before or after impact. She did not hear any sound from the airplane, but she thought that was likely because she was in her car with the windows up.

Ms. Olson noted that it was drizzling and misty at the time, but it was not very windy.

----- End of entries -----



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Timothy N. Sorensen
Aviation Accident Investigator
Central Region

Date: January 30, 2012
Person Contacted: Ms. Stephanie Olson
NTSB Accident Number: CEN12FA083 – Crystal Lake, IL

Narrative:

Ms. Olson provided that following additional information related to the above noted accident:

I know that I reported that I did not hear the plane, but the first time that I heard a small engine plane go by me a few weeks after the accident, it brought back vivid memories of what I had seen and heard. I realize now that, yes, I did hear the plane go by me. It was loud and was part of what grabbed my attention. I did not hear the engine falter or stutter at all.

----- End of entries -----

RECORD OF <input type="checkbox"/> VISIT <input type="checkbox"/> CONFERENCE OR <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TELEPHONE CALL		TIME 9:18 AM	DATE 11/29/2011
NAME (S) OF PERSON (S) CONTACTED OR IN CONFERENCE AND LOCATION Joe Crawford [REDACTED]		ROUTING	
		SYMBOL	INITIALS
SUBJECT N223CD accident in Crystal Lake, Illinois at 1025 on 11-26-2011			
DIGEST Mr. Crawford e-mailed the FAA hotline to offer a statement pertaining to radio transmissions between the PIC of N223CD and the DPA Air Traffic Control Tower. (ATCT)			
Mr. Crawford stated that he was monitoring 120.90 - the DPA ATCT frequency - between 1000 and 1015 central local time in preparation for a flight he was to soon execute.			
Mr. Crawford stated the PIC of N223CD appeared confused as to his whereabouts in relation to the DPA Airport. The PIC was offered a landing clearance by the DPA Tower Controller. The pilot repeatedly stated he "Did not want to get stuck by the weather." The PIC was cleared to execute a 180 degree turn back to DPA and cleared to land. The pilot stated that he no longer had the field in sight. The PIC continued to query the controller as to the weather conditions further North. The DPA Controller advised the PIC that Chicago-Executive Airport (KOPWK) was currently reporting VMC. The PIC was given Chicago Approach Frequency 120.55.			
CONTINUED ON Page 2			
CONCLUSION, ACTION TAKEN, OR REQUIRED N223CD had been afforded assistance and an opportunity to land at DPA by the Tower Controllers, but elected to proceed to an airport that was reporting VMC.			
DATE 11/29/2011	TITLE Aviation Safety Inspector	SIGNATURE [REDACTED] Michael Madhnik	

DIGEST (CONT.):

Mr. Crawford stated the PIC of N223CD repeated his statement of not wanting to get "Stuck by the weather" several times to 120.55.

Mr. Crawford ended his statement by adding the PIC never asked the DPA Controller for a Special VFR Clearance into the DPA Class D Airspace, nor did the controller offer a Special VFR Clearance. However, Mr. Crawford did state that he thought the DPA Tower Controller was extremely helpful.

RECORD OF <input type="checkbox"/> VISIT <input type="checkbox"/> CONFERENCE OR <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TELEPHONE CALL		TIME 10:00 AM	DATE 11/28/2011
NAME (S) OF PERSON (S) CONTACTED OR IN CONFERENCE AND LOCATION Don Behrens [REDACTED]		ROUTING	
		SYMBOL	INITIALS
SUBJECT N223CD Accident in Crystal Lake, Illinois at 10:25 on 11-26-2011			
DIGEST			
Mr. Behrens provided the following statement:			
Mr. Behrens was working in his farm yard when he heard an aircraft engine. He stated it sounded as if an aircraft was doing aerobatics, but could not see any aircraft above due to the low ceilings - Mr. Behrens specifically stated, when asked to clarify "Aerobatics," that the engine sounded like it was trying to climb then descend."			
Mr. Behrens went on to state that he then saw an aircraft flying toward the ground. He did not see a parachute behind the airplane, only a trail of white vapor. When asked to describe the engine sound and attitude of the aircraft, Mr. Behren stated he did not hear an engine, only a loud "Hissing sound." The aircraft then impacted the tree, imploded into a white cloud sending pieces of the aircraft scattering everywhere.			
Mr. Behrens stated he was on the scene approximately one-minute later. This inspector asked Mr. Behren if he smelled fuel when he arrived on scene. Mr. Behren stated "Yes."			
This inspector asked if it was a strong odor. Mr. Behren responded "No." CONTINUED Page 2			
CONCLUSION, ACTION TAKEN, OR REQUIRED			
The white vapor described by Mr. Behren might have been either the chute chord, which is white, or the vapor of a recently deployed ballistic rocket for the aircraft parachute.			
The hissing sounded described might be a result of the trailing nylon parachute at a high speed.			
DATE 11/28/2011	TITLE Aviation Safety Inspector	SIGNATURE [REDACTED] Michael Machnik	

DIGEST (CONT.):

Mr. Behren was then asked, again, what aircraft attitude he observed. Mr. Behren stated the aircraft was in a 70 degree pitch down attitude prior to impact.

RECORD OF <input type="checkbox"/> VISIT <input type="checkbox"/> CONFERENCE OR <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TELEPHONE CALL		TIME 11:45 AM	DATE 11/28/2011
NAME(S) OF PERSON(S) CONTACTED OR IN CONFERENCE AND LOCATION Jonathan Sara Cell # [REDACTED]		ROUTING	
		SYMBOL	INITIALS
SUBJECT N223CD Accident in Crystal Lake, Illinois at 10:25 on 11-26-2011			
DIGEST			
Mr. Sara provided the following statement:			
"I was driving West on Route 14 at around 10:25. I saw an object outside of my left window			
- traveling about the same speed." Mr. Sara stated he is familiar with ballistic			
parachutes for airplanes, and he described a red parachute trailing behind the aircraft.			
MR. Sara said the chute was not fully inflated.			
Mr. Sara stated the aircraft was in a 30 degree pitch down attitude with the right wing			
low. (This perspective of the right wing is from travelling in the same direction as the			
aircraft.) Mr. Sara stated he saw the top of the wings and the top of the fuselage. Mr.			
Sara went on to state that the right wing hit first.			
This inspector asked Mr. Sara if he smelled fuel when he arrived on the scene of the			
accident. Mr. Sara stated he was the first on the scene, and that he smelled fuel. This			
inspector asked if it was a strong odor of fuel, and for how long did the odor last. Mr.			
Sara responded yes, and for about 5 to 7 minutes, or until I got used to it.			
CONTINUED ON Page 2			
CONCLUSION, ACTION TAKEN, OR REQUIRED			
Mr. Sara's statement describes an aircraft in a downward spiral or spin condition prior to			
impact.			
DATE 11/28/2011	TITLE Aviation Safety Inspector	SIGNATURE [REDACTED] Michael Machnik	

DIGEST (CONT.):

This inspector asked Mr. Sara how far from the aircraft he was when he first saw it heading for the ground. Mr. Sara responded "About 250 feet."

Mr. Sara then worked with Ms. Gill in a rescue effort for survivors until EMS responders arrived.

RECORD OF <input type="checkbox"/> VISIT <input type="checkbox"/> CONFERENCE OR <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TELEPHONE CALL		TIME 11:30 AM	DATE 11/28/2011
NAME(S) OF PERSON(S) CONTACTED OR IN CONFERENCE AND LOCATION Kierstin Gill Cell # [REDACTED]		ROUTING	
		SYMBOL	INITIALS
SUBJECT N223CD Accident in Crystal Lake, Illinois at 10:25 on 11-26-2011			
DIGEST This inspector telephone Ms. Gill to take her statement as an eye witness to the accident of N223CD. Ms. Gill stated she was driving East on Route 14, in Crystal Lake at approximately 10:25 when she saw an airplane falling from the sky. Ms. Gill added there was a red parachute trailing the aircraft - not deployed, just trailing - and that the aircraft was "whirling around;" Ms. Gill was approximately one-mile from the accident site at this time. When asked what attitude the aircraft appeared to be in, Ms. Gill responded "It was in a sharp angle down toward the ground and tipping to the left just before impact." Ms. Gill stated the left wing was down and was the first to impact the tree. A large cloud of "White dust" appeared and pieces of the aircraft dispersed and imploded.			
Ms. Gill immediately called 911 and entered the crash site for rescue. Each victim was checked for pulse and breath. Ms. Gill discovered no survivors.			
When asked how long did Ms. Gill see the aircraft before impact, She stated "The whole thing happened within only a few seconds."			
CONTINUED ON: Page 2			
CONCLUSION, ACTION TAKEN, OR REQUIRED From the witness statement, the aircraft appears to have been in a downward spiral or possible spin condition prior to impact.			
DATE 11/28/2011	TITLE Aviation Safety Inspector	SIGNATURE [REDACTED] MACHNIK	

DIGEST (CONT.):

This inspector asked Ms. Gill if she had noticed any odors of fuel when she arrive on the accident scene. She responded "Yes."



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Timothy N. Sorensen
Aviation Accident Investigator
Central Region

Date: November 28, 2011
Person Contacted: Mr. David Hooper
NTSB Accident Number: CEN12FA083 – Crystal Lake, IL

Narrative:

Mr. Hooper reported he was on an instrument training flight with another pilot from Rockford (RFD) to Lake in the Hills (3CK) about the time of the accident. He heard the radio conversation between Chicago Approach and the accident airplane, and thought he might be having some trouble. Mr. Hooper noted that the accident pilot had asked for the closest VFR airport. The controller reportedly suggested Midway (MDW) or Chicago Executive (PWK), but the pilot stated that he did not want to go to PWK because he didn't want to get trapped by the weather. The accident pilot ultimately informed the controller that he was proceeding westbound on his own.

Mr. Hooper stated that they were in solid instrument meteorological conditions (IMC) at 5,000 feet msl returning from RFD to 3CK. They flew the GPS 26 approach into 3CK. He recalled having intermittent vertical ground contact, with little or no forward visibility, at 1,400 feet msl. They broke out of the clouds on the approach about 1,300 feet msl, with approximately 2 miles visibility. There had been light to moderate rain, and some light turbulence in the vicinity of RFD. There was still some light rain, but no turbulence, near 3CK. They did not encounter any icing either to or from RFD. He recalled the outside air temperature as 50°F at 5,000 feet msl.

Mr. Hooper noted that they departed 3CK for RFD about 0900. The cloud ceiling was about 600 feet agl on departure. They flew two approaches into RFD before returning to 3CK. They were in IMC both ways.

----- End of entries -----



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Timothy N. Sorensen
Aviation Accident Investigator
Central Region

Date: November 28, 2011
Person Contacted: Mr. Jeff Dickenson
NTSB Accident Number: CEN12FA083 – Crystal Lake, IL

Narrative:

Mr. Dickenson was on the instrument training flight with Mr. Hooper about the time of the accident. He reported that the accident airplane was already on the Chicago approach frequency when they checked in. The accident pilot asked the controller for airports in the area that were VFR. The controller noted that MDW and PWK were VFR. The accident pilot did not want to go to MDW, and later declined PWK. The accident pilot subsequently informed the controller that they had left the area. There seemed to be some tension in the accident pilot's voice.

Mr. Dickenson noted that they were in solid IMC en route back from RFD. When they departed 3CK about 0900, the ceiling was approximately 1,600 feet msl and they climbed to 4,000 feet msl en route to RFD. On the way back to 3CK, they cruised at 5,000 feet msl. They encountered some moderate rain, but mostly it was light rain or drizzle. From the ground to about 2,200 feet msl, they experienced consistent light turbulence/light chop. There was no moderate turbulence during their flight.

Mr. Dickenson reported that they flew the RNAV/GPS 26 approach into 3CK. They broke out at 400 feet agl (1,300 feet msl). He recalled some gusty wind, but there was no icing during the flight. The outside air temperature at 5,000 feet msl was about 50°F. They landed about 1025.

Mr. Dickenson commented that the weather had been forecast for days. It did not "collapse" during their flight.

----- End of entries -----