



National Transportation Safety Board

Memorandum

Date: April 11, 2012
Name: Charles Wright – witness
Subject: ERA12FA271, Everglades City, FL, N548SF, CA-8 accident

Mr. Wright witnessed the accident airplane flying during the week prior to the accident. He was interviewed over the telephone, after the accident. Following is a summary of the interview with him.

Mr. Wright stated that he was outside his shop on Chokoloskee Island (3 miles SE of Everglades Airpark) when he observed the accident airplane flying a few days prior to the accident. According to Mr. Wright, the pilot was "buzzing the island." The airplane was at an altitude of 200-300 feet performing steep turns. It approached the island from the northwest, and maneuvered over the island "low, fast, and in a steep bank."

Mr. Wright reported that he worked for 30 years as a certified flight instructor and previously had a hangar at Everglades Airpark.

When Mr. Wright observed the accident airplane flying, he thought someone needed to say something to the pilot about the low-altitude, steep-bank flying.

Jill M. Demko
Air Safety Investigator



National Transportation Safety Board

Memorandum

Date: April 7, 2012
Name: J.R. Swales - witness
Subject: ERA12FA271, Everglades City, FL, N548SF, CA-8 accident

Mr. Swales was a witness to the above-referenced accident. He was interviewed in person at the accident site. Following is a summary of the interview with him.

Mr. Swales stated he was in a boat, off the end of the runway. He observed the airplane climbing after takeoff, and then it made a sharp, fast, right turn. Mr. Swales reported that it was still climbing when it became almost inverted. It then "fell" back to a level attitude before it descended in a left-wing-low attitude and impacted the ground. Mr. Swales compared the attitude to a "5:00 position."

Mr. Swales reported that he could not hear the airplane's engine because of the wind coming off the water, and the sound of the boat.

He described the impact as a "relatively soft crash," and stated there was no fire at the time of impact. Within seconds, the fire began near the cockpit area.

Mr. Swales also provided a written statement.

Jill M. Demko
Air Safety Investigator

Jose Wejebe

EVERGLADE CITY PLANE CRASH 04/06/2012

AT ABOUT 4:30 PM ON FRIDAY AFTERNOON I WAS DRIVING MY BOAT DOWN THE CHANNEL APPROACHING THE END OF THE AIRPORT RUNWAY. JOSE'S PLANE WAS JUST GETTING AIRBORN DIRECTLY IN FRONT OF US, APPROX. 100 YDS. IN FROM THE RIVER'S EDGE. THE PLANE WAS ON A GRADUAL CLIMB APPROX. 100 TO 150 FEET IN THE AIR AND PROCEEDED TO MAKE A SHARP RIGHT BANK TURN AND ⁹⁰° BACK TOWARDS THE TERMINAL.

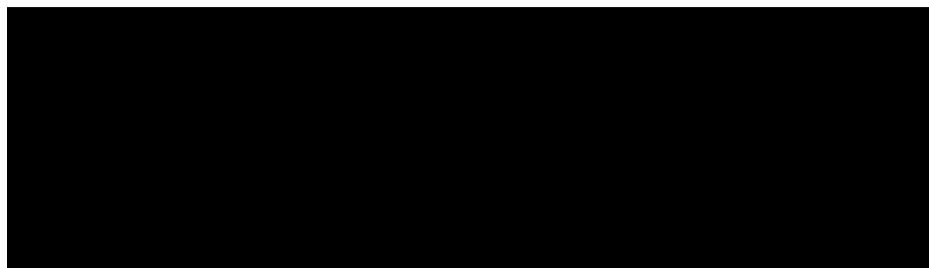
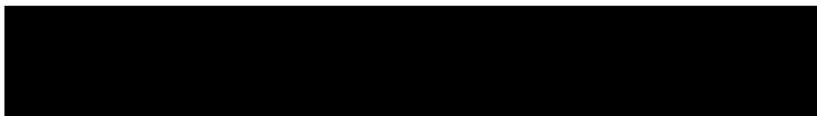
AS THE PLANE WAS NEARING THE END OF THE SHARP TURN, IT APPEARED TO LOOSE FORWARD THRUST AND BECAME ALMOST INVERTED WHEREBY THE RIGHT WING WOULD HAVE BEEN POINTING AT ABOUT 4 O'CLOCK. AT THIS POINT, IT LOOKED LIKE THE PLANE HAD LOST ALL POWER AS THOUGH IT HAD STALLED OUT. IT WAS EVIDENT THE PILOT WAS IN TROUBLE AND AT THIS POINT THE PLANE BEGAN TO NOSE DOWN VEERING LEFT BRING THE PLANE BACK TO AN UPRIGHT POSITION HEADING DOWNWARD AT ABOUT A 5 O'CLOCK POSITION. ALL CONTROL OF THE PLANE WAS LOST AND IT HIT THE GROUND AT A 5 O'CLOCK POSITION WITH SLIGHTLY MORE IMPACT AT APPROX. 10° TO 15° TOWARDS THE LEFT SIDE OF THE PLANE.


I IMMEDIATELY PARKED MY BOAT AT THE FLOATING

park along side of the field where the crash occurred. We called 911 and proceeded to run over to the crash site. The plane was relatively intact from the cockpit to the rear. At about 70 yds back AT THIS TIME as we were fastly approaching the crash, there was no evidence of any fire. As we got about 30 yds away, flames broke out in the cockpit area of the plane. Within seconds, the entire plane was engulfed in flames. We then kept our distance and AWAITED for the fire dept. and AUTHORITIES to ARRIVE at the scene.

SHOULD you require any further assistance or CLARIFICATION with respect to this tragic event, don't hesitate to contact me.

James "JR" SWALES



RECORD OF <input type="checkbox"/> VISIT <input type="checkbox"/> CONFERENCE OR <input type="checkbox"/> TELEPHONE CALL		TIME	DATE
NAME (s) OF PERSON (s) CONTACTED OR IN CONFERENCE AND LOCATION		ROUTING	
		SYMBOL	INITIALS
SUBJECT			
DIGEST			
<p> my wife AND I WERE DRIVING ALONG COAST LOOKING AT ALL THE BOATS. WE BOTH SAW A PLANE COMING UP OVER HOUSES AND THEN LOOKED LIKE IT WENT INTO A FULL CIRCLE AND WENT DOWN --- ↓ </p> <p>RANDY STEWART</p> 			
CONCLUSION, ACTION TAKEN, OR REQUIRED			
DATE	TITLE	SIGNATURE	



National Transportation Safety Board

Memorandum

Date: April 7, 2012
Name: Nathan Goff - witness
Subject: ERA12FA271, Everglades City, FL, N548SF, CA-8 accident

Mr. Goff was an Operations Specialist working at the Everglades Airpark. He was interviewed in person, at the Airpark, after the accident. Following is a summary of the interview with him.

Mr. Goff stated he knew the pilot since the pilot had flown into the Airpark many times previously. Most recently, he flew in on March 31, 2012 and remained in town for the week. He was shooting footage for his fishing show while he was in town. Mr. Goff commented that on Wednesday (April 4, 2012), the pilot flew for a while in the local area.

According to Mr. Goff, the pilot had a history of "hotdogging" at the Airpark. He often performed steep turns after takeoff, and Mr. Goff had observed at least one instance in which the airplane almost rolled inverted during the turn.

Mr. Goff had several conversations with the pilot about procedures he was not following at the Airpark. In December, Mr. Goff informed him he was using the wrong radio frequency. More recently, Mr. Goff instructed the pilot that he needed to follow the procedures for the left traffic pattern, when departing from runway 33. Those procedures were in place to avoid departures over the nearby town. Despite the known procedures, Mr. Goff stated that the pilot often made a right turn after departure from runway 33, which resulted in the airplane flying low over homes and the town.

Jill M. Demko
Air Safety Investigator



National Transportation Safety Board

Memorandum

Date: April 11, 2012

Name: Krissy Wejebe – pilot's daughter

Subject: ERA12FA271, Everglades City, FL, N548SF, CA-8 accident

Ms. Wejebe was the daughter of the pilot killed in the above-referenced accident. She was interviewed over the telephone, after the accident. Following is a summary of that interview.

Ms. Wejebe was asked if she knew what her father's schedule was like during the week prior to the accident. She stated that he flew from Merritt Island to Everglades Airpark on the Sunday prior to the accident (April 1, 2012). He spent the week in the Everglades filming his fishing show for television.

Ms. Wejebe spoke to her father about 0830 on the day of the accident. He intended to fly to Merritt Island to visit his girlfriend for the holiday weekend, and then return to Everglades Airpark the following week.

Ms. Wejebe was asked if she had flown with her father. She said she had, and he was a "great pilot." She said he was "amazing at everything he did - including fishing, flying and being a dad." Ms. Wejebe stated she trusted him explicitly.

According to Ms. Wejebe, her father had been flying for about 10 years and flew often – about once a week. Prior to building the accident airplane, he owned a Cessna with a friend of his.

Ms. Wejebe was asked if her father had any medical conditions. She responded that he did not, and was not taking any medication to her knowledge. However, Ms. Wejebe did report that her father had undergone 2 hip replacements and his shoulder had been bothering him lately.

Ms. Wejebe was asked if she knew where her father's pilot logbook or airplane logbooks were located. She thought they may have been in the airplane but agreed to look for them.

Jill M. Demko
Air Safety Investigator



National Transportation Safety Board

Memorandum

Date: May 24, 2012

Name: Krissy Wejebe – pilot's daughter

Subject: ERA12FA271, Everglades City, FL, N548SF, CA-8 accident

Ms. Wejebe was the daughter of the pilot killed in the above-referenced accident. She was interviewed over the telephone, after the accident. Following is a summary of that interview.

In a follow-up interview, Ms. Wejebe was asked if she was able to locate her father's pilot logbook or any maintenance logbooks for the airplane. She reported that she searched both of his residences and was not able to find them.

Jill M. Demko
Air Safety Investigator



National Transportation Safety Board

Memorandum

Date: April 12, 2012
Name: Steve Darrow – Composite Technologies
Subject: ERA12FA271, Everglades City, FL, N548SF, CA-8 accident

Mr. Darrow worked for Composite Technologies, who performed maintenance on the accident airplane. He was interviewed over the telephone, after the accident. Following is a summary of the interview with him.

Mr. Darrow was asked when the most recent maintenance was performed on the accident airplane. He responded that the airplane was brought in by the accident pilot about 4 weeks prior to the accident to have the nose wheel shimmy fixed. They also cleaned the airplane, as oil was appearing on the underside of the cowl/fuselage.

According to Mr. Darrow, his company had not performed an annual inspection in 3 years (2009). However, the accident pilot had brought the airplane to his facility for other maintenance about once a year.

Mr. Darrow stated that the accident pilot often performed his own maintenance.

Jill M. Demko
Air Safety Investigator