



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Robert Gretz
Senior Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region Aviation

Date: October 4, 2019
Person Contacted: James Traficante, Simsbury, CT
NTSB Accident Number: ERA20MA001

Narrative:

Mr. Traficante was interviewed via telephone. He stated that he is a Command Chief for the Air National Guard and had been a Crew Chief on a C-130. Mr. Traficante was in the rear most right seat in the B-17. The crew had trouble starting an engine due to a "wet mag." Shortly after takeoff, the loadmaster came to the rear with a sense of urgency and told everyone to fasten their seatbelts. The loadmaster then returned to the cockpit and stood between the two pilots, and appeared to be manipulating the throttle levers. Mr. Traficante could see out the window that the airplane was low and braced himself for impact. He told his friend, who was in the rear most left seat to brace for impact as well. After the accident, Mr. Traficante was able to egress the airplane. His friend and the passenger directly in front of his friend were also able to egress. Mr. Traficante suffered a fractured arm and burns.



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Date: December 4, 2019
Person Contacted: Andrew Barrett, East Longmeadow, MA
NTSB Accident Number: ERA20MA001

Narrative:

Mr. Barrett was interviewed via telephone. He was able to provide the seating position of other passengers, based on his subsequent conversations with their families. Mr. Barrett stated that he was told to fasten his seatbelt prior to the flight, but was not told of exits or fire extinguishers. There is no intercom system and he does not know what briefing the forward four passengers received as he was one of the rear six passengers. After up and moving about, he was told to go back to his seat and fasten his seatbelt, but was not told why.



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Date: January 7, 2020
Person Contacted: Dan Mikalonis, Heavy's Automotive, Windsor Locks, CT
NTSB Accident Number: ERA20MA001

Narrative:

Mr. Mikalonis was interviewed via telephone. He was standing outside of his business and observed the accident airplane fly over low. He stated that the right inboard engine appeared to be misfiring, smoking, and the propeller stopped turning. Mr. Mikolonis will forward security video, but stated that the camera is aimed at the parking lot and did not capture much.



MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

Heidi Kemner
Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region Aviation

October 7, 2019

Subject: ERA20MA001
Who: Chris Hagenow – [REDACTED]

In a telephone conversation, Mr. Hagenow stated following:

- I was just in the field mowing with two other guys.
- We had just called to clear out of the safety area.
- We looked up and the plane was just really low and banking hard to the right.
- One of the motors was out, the propeller wasn't spinning.
- Other than that, it didn't really have any unusual sounds.
- At first, I thought he was flying low because of the passengers on board.
- Once he hit the approach lights I thought "oh boy."
- He hit all the approach lights with the right-wing.
- Then the right-wing drug into the ground, that's what twisted him toward the final crash site.
- Once he landed on all three wheels, there was no slowing down, no braking.
- It almost looked like he picked up speed when he was on the ground.
- The only sound I remember was when he made contact with the tank and it exploded.
- I didn't hear a pitch change in the engines, we didn't hear much because we had the mowers running.
- The wing dug in and turned him and then it was no stopping him.
- There was an initial explosion and then there were multiple little explosions after that.



MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

Heidi Kemner
Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region Aviation

October 8, 2019

Subject: ERA20MA001
Who: Jeff Dawson - Witness

In a telephone conversation, Mr. Dawson stated the following:

- I watched the airplane taxi out and takeoff to the East. I was standing on the ramp at Signature flight service at BDL.
- The airplane took off runway 6 heading east, got out to look over the Connecticut River.
- Then it turned south down the river for only about 10 seconds, then turned east again.
- I was out on the ramp of signature flight service on the north side of runway 6.
- It was only 1000 ft or 1500 ft off the ground and never went higher.
- At that point, the airplane was getting out of sight, so I started walking back to the main building.
- Before I got to it, I saw in the big picture window, a friend tapped on the window and pointed out toward the sky.
- I turned around and I saw the B17 coming back on the downwind for runway 6.
- I watched him start the downwind, he was only 6-700 ft off the ground when he was even with the threshold of runway 33 and was not that far away.
- He almost flew over the threshold for runway 33.
- The tail was in the low position and he was barely moving.
- It was going very slow.
- At that point I thought he was staying low to thrill his passengers.
- I didn't know he was in trouble.
- He got past the terminal building, but he didn't do a squared off downwind turn, he rounded it off.
- He went over the United Technologies building, then dropped below the tree line by Route 20.

- I lost sight of him below the tree line.
- I thought I was going to see a fireball.
- He emerged from the tree line and made a right hand turn to final on runway 6.
- He was less than 100 ft above the ground.
- My elevation level relative to the runway 6 threshold, I did not see the landing gear hit the lighting.
- It looked like he was 5 feet off the ground.
- He squared off the ground and was 5 ft off the ground of runway 6.
- The right-wing tip dropped, and I heard it scrap the runway.
- The plane made a hard-sharp right turn.
- It made the sharp right almost pivoting on the wing.
- It leveled out again.
- After it leveled out again, the engines went to full throttle and the airplane accelerated into the tanks.
- Everything was slow motion but when he made that right turn, the engines went to full throttle and I saw the tail actually raise up from the prop wash and it started to accelerate toward the tank. At the last minute I saw him pull up like he was trying to clear the tank.