

Fabian Salazar
Air Safety Investigator
Western Pacific Region

Date: June 22, 2023

Subject: WPR22LA268 / Record of Conversation

Contact: William Ulrich, Director of Operations (DO), Van Wagner Aerial Media

In a telephone interview with the DO, he mentioned a conversation he had with the pilot that occurred after the accident. In that conversation the pilot reported that he had calculated the fuel burn to be about 7.4 to 7.6 gallons per hour.

The DO indicated that the fuel system for the accident airplane did have two 18-gallon fuel tanks and that due to the fuel lines, the right tank was used as an auxiliary tank and the left tank was used as the primary tank. He stated that it was company policy for the pilots to land with 45 minutes fuel reserve. The DO indicated that the accident pilot's method of taking off initially with the left tank, switching over to the right tank, and later switching back to the left tank, was consistent with the company training. When asked about the pilot operating the airplane for 2 hours and 36 minutes on the right tank alone, he indicated that "that was pushing it." He also indicated that even though the tanks were topped off, there could be a difference in a few gallons depending on where the top of the top fuel level was.

When asked about carburetor icing issues and towing banners, the DO indicated that carburetor icing can occur, but it does not often result in an immediate total loss of power, and that usually it results in the engine beginning to run rough.

The DO stated that pilots fly about 500 ft above ground level and about a pier length offshore. He stated that about 2000 ft was acceptable.

When asked about the banner, he described it as a 40 ft by 80 ft banner that weighed about 55 to 60 pounds. He stated that the pilot ditched the airplane near a lifeguard training activity and immediately after the crash, lifeguards went out and recovered the pilot and the banner. The banner was then recovered by the operator.

RECORD OF VISIT CONFERENCE OR TELEPHONE CALL

TIME

4:45 PM

DATE

07/22/2022

NAME (S) OF PERSON (S) CONTACTED OR IN CONFERENCE AND LOCATION

Gwyneth Russo, Life Guard on duty [REDACTED]

ROUTING

SYMBOL

INITIALS

SUBJECT

N3666K loss power moments after switching from right to left fuel tank.

DIGEST

Life Guard reported the aircraft began a rapid decent ,no indications of the engine running or loss of control noted. The plane struck the water nose first and came to rest right side up. The pilot was able to egress and was resting on the top side of the aircraft before being rescued.

CONCLUSION, ACTION TAKEN, OR REQUIRED

DATE

07/22/2022

TITLE

ASI Marcus A. Giordano

SIGNATURE

RECORD OF VISIT CONFERENCE OR TELEPHONE CALL

TIME

4:30 PM

DATE

07/22/2022

NAME (S) OF PERSON (S) CONTACTED OR IN CONFERENCE AND LOCATION

Jack Woodson, Life Guard on duty [REDACTED]

ROUTING

SYMBOL INITIALS

SUBJECT

N3666K loss power moments after switching from right to left fuel tank.

DIGEST

Life Guard reported the aircraft began a rapid decent ,no indications of the engine running or loss of control noted. The plane struck the water nose first and came to rest right side up. The pilot was able to egress and was resting on the top side of the aircraft before being rescued.

CONCLUSION, ACTION TAKEN, OR REQUIRED

DATE

07/22/2022

TITLE

ASI Marcus A. Giordano

SIGNATURE

RECORD OF VISIT CONFERENCE OR TELEPHONE CALL

TIME

4:00 PM

DATE

07/22/2022

NAME (S) OF PERSON (S) CONTACTED OR IN CONFERENCE AND LOCATION

Michell Smith, Life Guard on duty [REDACTED]

ROUTING

SYMBOL

INITIALS

SUBJECT

N3666K loss power moments after switching from right to left fuel tank.

DIGEST

Life Guard reported the aircraft began a rapid decent ,no indications of the engine running or loss of control noted. The plane struck the water nose first and came to rest right side up. The pilot was able to egress and was resting on the top side of the aircraft before being rescued.

CONCLUSION, ACTION TAKEN, OR REQUIRED

DATE

07/22/2022

TITLE

ASI Marcus A. Giordano

SIGNATURE