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|--|---|--|---|-----------------|--------------------|
| RECORD OF  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> VISIT | <input type="checkbox"/> CONFERENCE OR   | <input type="checkbox"/> TELEPHONE CALL | TIME<br>1:45 PM | DATE<br>12/07/2022 |
| NAME (S) OF PERSON (S) CONTACTED OR IN CONFERENCE AND LOCATION<br>Patrick G. Merkle  |   |  |   | ROUTING         |                    |
|  |   |  |   | SYMBOL          | INITIALS           |
| Michael T. Bevan, ASI  |   |  |   |                 |                    |
| James C. Kelly, ASI  |   |  |   |                 |                    |
| SUBJECT<br>Interview with Mr. Merkle regarding his crash into a high tension line tower in N201RF on 27, November 2022   |   |  |   |                 |                    |
| DIGEST<br>1346 acknowledged receipt of PBR and was shown credentials of Inspector Bevan. Spoke about having an address issue because he moved within the neighborhood and he didn't think he had to really change it officially because the mail man knows who lives where etc. Rapport built and he spoke some about how much he flies the route etc. but nothing specific.<br>1350 Mr. Merkle asked about the possibility of civil fines from the FAA. Answered by MB (the FAA does not issue civil fines in most cases. Merkle is an airman and mostly those end with at worst certificate action with the worst case being revocation)<br>1352 MB asked for approx time in Mooney aircraft? Answer meandered through different aircraft and timeframes (he has 1475TT) and eventually landed on an approximation of 500 hours in the Mooney. ESTIMATED<br>1356 discussion began of the trip in question. MB provided the CD of the flights' track. Meandering conversation about his flying back and forth to CT and NY and his mother in CT and how he flies the route to NY a lot etc. Mentioned that MB has spoken to his girlfriend which MB confirmed later in the conversation as having happened soon after the accident not today or yesterday (my words on the today or yesterday)<br>-Went up to NY to help his girlfriends son with buying a condo. On the way up he filed IFR<br>CONCLUSION, ACTION TAKEN, OR REQUIRED<br>He doesn't know the Garmin well at all<br>He did not try to correctly fly the approach or even properly fly IFR after confusion. knowingly deviated from correct procedures. if he had gotten spatial disorientation earlier in the flight he had put many more citizens at risk.<br>He was 500ft low at one point (700 from 1200) he failed to follow repeated ATC instructions |   |  |   |                 |                    |
| DATE<br>05/04/2023   | TITLE<br>Aviation Safety Inspector        | SIGNATURE<br> |   |                 |                    |

but cancelled it after encountering good weather.

-for that flight he received a briefing on the computer (1800wxbrief) then backed it up with another briefing where he spoke with a human

-flight home received a brief from 1800wxbrief again but did not speak with a person this time. timeframe approx 1410-1415. He states that he filed IFR in that briefing but it (my words, not his) got lost there/never showed up.

-He followed the DP on departure (common flight for him) the one to the Sparta VOR (his words) later id'd as the Prop 1 departure

-When he got to the "Wooly" gate that is where the changes/problems started he said. He made a large loop around after typing in the wrong info on the Garmin (Begka?). He has some struggles with the Garmin functionality.

-Wx was good at the time with 2700ft cloud bases and he was at about 2200 at Begka. MB provided an approach plate for reference and asked which minimums he was using? LPV? no clear verbal answer but he put his finger on it as I remember.

-My (JK) statement.....things got out of order and jumbled a lot throughout. worse from here on...

The Cheyenne ahead of him on approach went missed with wx approx ceiling 200/ mist 200 and diverted to FDK. He thought he could make it in because he was in a slower aircraft and could just land long on the runway if necessary. Somewhere in here he stated that his girlfriend was mainly sleeping and not helpful at all. He keeps 4 things with him in the aircraft at all times (he only got to 1 which is a handheld GPS (the I-Fly740) that is easier to enter data into than the longer more involved process with the G430) time 1408 At waypoint "Timbe" he was at 2200 but was receiving "no vertical guidance" from the Garmin. He never said exactly when he descended to 1200 but stated that at 1200 he saw the ground and "stopped flying instruments"

-He stated that he had "an 800ft alarm set" in the aircraft but "never heard it" the 800 are LPV minimums but he stated that the LPV is "not functioning".

MB asked about how he knew he was on the approach. He stated that he was confident he was on the approach (my word, confident) and then paused and said he uses the pink/magenta line on the GPS to tell that the approach is active.

MB stated that the GPS will have the letters "APR" in the bottom corner when the approach is active and Mr. Merkle indicated that he did not remember that fact and that is he should have known that and feels silly/bad (my words for his sentiment)

Mr. Merkle then stated that he was "seeing the ground and wanting to get home" and "just didn't see the wires" and "didn't switch gears to flying a different approach" when the LPV didn't work and he just "kept expecting to see the airport".

Reiterated that he "remembers setting it" about the 800ft alarm but has no recollection of it going off. Stated that he knows the area and the approaches very well and thought that he was "inside the wires". MB stated that he was getting low altitude alerts from the controller side and that when controller change happened that it can be heard on the tape that one controller references Mr. Merkle's flight and says "I hope he's alright" because he was so low for so long. Also came back to the "yes, I believe I saw the GPS go into APR mode" and said he relies on the color of the line in the GPS to say he's on the approach. 1427 I was asked by MB if I had any questions for him and I asked him to walk me through the before the flight day. Was he rested etc. He said he had a good nights sleep, no pressure and was relaxed and happy about the trip.

My second question was if the aircraft he was flying had an autopilot? He said yes, but no vertical guidance is provided with it and he was not using it on this flight. He dislikes the "tugging" of the autopilot.

-NO particular order-

He states that he lands smoothly and has been complimented on it  
said that he could have followed the Cheyenne to Frederick  
said that he intended to follow the glideslope but intercept it below the published  
altitude  
said that he was following the localizer but was "well, left of it but following it" (he  
was well right of it AND left of it later)  
his girlfriend he thinks only woke up when they hit the wires  
his son flies C-130's (could be wrong about the a/c type) (AC-130's maybe) and is worried  
about his dad and might have to fly left seat after this  
stated that one of his training flights might not be in his logbook, but he has the record  
of it.  
said that he wants to be an example for what not to do  
asked MB more than once how he thought this would go  
asked me what I thought, I said MB is fair and reasonable but I am still new and haven't  
seen a lot of these. He said he didn't hear about a lot of accidents and I said that most  
don't end up getting any publicity etc.

#### Use of the Judgment Assessment Matrix

Most fatal accidents include a lack of SRM skills (task management  
(TM), risk management (RM), automation management (AM),  
aeronautical decision making (ADM), controlled flight into terrain  
(CFIT), and situational awareness (SA)) as a causal factor.  
Consequently, examiners must evaluate the applicant to ensure that  
he or she has the appropriate level of these skills. A Judgment  
Assessment Matrix is provided as a tool to evaluate the applicant's  
SRM skills objectively. The examiner will use the Judgment  
Assessment Matrix during the practical test. Since examiners give  
multiple tests, it is recommended that examiners make photocopies  
of the matrix.

#### Special Emphasis Areas

Examiners shall place special emphasis upon areas of aircraft  
operations considered critical to flight safety. Among these are:

1. Positive aircraft control;
2. Positive exchange of the flight controls procedure (who is  
flying the aircraft);
3. Stall/spin awareness;
4. Collision avoidance;
5. Wake turbulence avoidance;
6. Land and hold short operations (LAHSO);
7. Runway incursion avoidance;
8. CFIT;
9. ADM and RM;
10. Checklist usage;

#### Introduction

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Change 2 (3/16/2010)

11. SRM;
12. Icing condition operational hazards, anti-icing and deicing  
equipment, differences, and approved use and operations;  
and
13. Other areas deemed appropriate to any phase of the  
practical test.

With the exception of SRM, any given area may not be addressed  
specifically under a Task, but all areas are essential to flight safety  
and will be evaluated during the practical test.