



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Noreen Price
Aviation Accident Investigator
Alaska Regional Office

Date: February 27, 2020
Persons Contacted: Mr. Bill Starr, owner Honolulu Soaring
NTSB Accident Number: ANC20FA024, N65070 Cessna 305A

Narrative: Mr. Starr was interviewed in person and by telephone by Noreen Price, the NTSB investigator-in-charge. He was the owner of Honolulu Soaring which owned the accident airplane. He is known widely as "Mr. Bill" and this is a summary of his statements.

Mr. Bill was provided with information about the NTSB investigative process, preliminary report timeline, and next of kin communications.

Mr. Bill has owned the company for about 50 years. He has about 2 part time tow pilots and 2 full time glider pilots and an administrative support person. At one time he had four L19 airplanes. Two of them were in ground loop accidents. The company provides glider training, but mostly tourist rides and aerobatic glider flights.

He knew Mr. Bill Inoka (deceased instructor pilot) for 30 years. He was a tow pilot for three different tow operations at the airfield, particularly the Civil Air Patrol (CAP). He was also the head of maintenance and an instructor for CAP. He provided check rides for all CAP airplanes. He was not an employee of Honolulu Soaring. He was just providing L19 training and check out, free of charge. He has a lot of L19 time and is the resident expert. The company provides tows for CAP gliders, not for profit. They pay for cost reimbursement. Bill would provide training and check rides for the company L19s. Mr. Bill stated that they work with CAP pilots often and help support their operation. His company is not designed to make a lot of money. He can usually stay ahead of the bills with 6 to 9 rides a day. They don't fly when the winds are from the west or bad weather. Lately, the weather has been bad.

Mr. Rick Rogers (deceased front seat pilot) was not an employee of Honolulu Soaring. He retired from Hawaiian Airlines a long time ago, but then he became an archivist and promoter for the company. Mr. Rogers was also a flight instructor and was working out a deal at Barbers Point to instruct in a twin engine airplane, but he wasn't sure what happened to that agreement. Mr. Bill and Mr. Rogers had been planning to add Mr. Roger's Grob 109 motor glider to the operation to provide rides and instruction in it. Mr. Rogers had owned it for many years. Mr. Bill stated the Mr. Rogers wanted to get tow qualified to help out the operation. On the day of the accident, he was getting training in the L19. Mr. Rogers

completed a flight with Mr. Inoka the previous Saturday. The L19 “is its own beast.” Mr. Bill stated that he didn’t need Mr. Rogers in the operation, but it was good to have extras.

Mr. Bill stated that Mr. Rogers exclaimed to him after his first L19 training flight “I am humbled.” Mr. Bill explained that the L19 is difficult to fly. It is a hand full and has poor ground handling characteristics. He said that his assistant, Kim, saw one of the landings on the day of the accident.

On the day of the accident, Mr. Inoka flew over from Kauai early to provide L19 training to Mr. Rogers in Mr. Bill’s airplane. Mr. Bill gave them permission to fly the company airplane for training. The glider operations usually start at 1000 at the airfield. The plan was to do the training, then return the airplane to the company to start the tow/glider operations (Honolulu Soaring and CAP flights.) Mr. Alan Sitt was supposed to fly the L19 for towing at 1000. There were 6 flights scheduled for the day. The company also tows other gliders at the airfield.

The airplane was flown about 100 hours every quarter. Mr. Bill estimated that the airplane accumulated about 100 hours since the last 100 hour inspection in September.

Mr. Bobby Seladis maintained the airplane. He is not an employee, but rather contracted to perform maintenance. Merrill Claussen used to maintain the airplane, but he found other work in 2018, so he started using Mr. Seladis to perform inspections. Mr. Starr stated that it is difficult to find mechanics at Dillingham Airfield because there is not much work there. He has been lucky to have the partners and mechanics that they have had. He never had a problem with Mr. Seladis. He found him very resourceful with metal repairs. He had worked at the airfield for many years. He used to work at Pacific. None of the pilots ever complained about the maintenance. Mr. Sitt, one of the pilots recently stated that the airplane was doing great. The engine was overhauled about 2 years ago. He stated that he was unaware of an engine power loss on the accident airplane about 6 weeks ago. He did hear about a binding flight control issue from one pilot. I know that Bobby and one of the pilots were working on that. He saw Mr. Seladis and a pilot looking into the wing, then Mr. Seladis cut something that could have been binding. He did not remember how long ago, but he knows it was fixed. He had heard that the airplane started a right hand turn at midfield prior to the accident. He thought maybe as they started to turn, Bill could not see so he pulled power off to get back to runway, then added high power resulting in nose up stall.

Mr. Bill was advised that there were anomalies observed with the flight control cables that indicated that they were not maintained properly, and that sections of cable and pulleys were sent to lab for examination.