

CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY OF THE PHILIPPINES
Aircraft Accident Investigation and Inquiry Board
Aircraft Accident Report

BASIC INFORMATION

Aircraft Registration No. : RP-C4431

Aircraft Type/Model : Piper Seneca/PA-34-200

Owner/Operator : Aviatour’s Fly’n, Inc.

Address of Owner : General Aviation Area, Mactan-Cebu
International Airport (MCIA), Lapu-lapu City

Date/Time of Accident : August 18, 2012/1625H¹

Type of Operation : Non-Scheduled (charter) Flight

Type of Occurrence : Aircraft crashed into the sea during landing

Place of Accident : Approximately 1.1 kilometers from the
threshold of Runway 21 of Masbate Airport

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Aviatour’s RP-C4431 (call sign X4431), a six-seater Piper Seneca aircraft, took off from Mactan-Cebu International Airport at approximately 1507H for a chartered flight to Naga. On board the aircraft were the pilot, Capt. Jessup Bahinting and three passengers including the DILG Secretary Jesse Robredo and his police aide, P/Insp. Paolo Abrazado. One of the three passengers according to the flight plan was a Nepalese student pilot at Aviatour’s Flight Training School who was seated at the RH front seat beside the captain. The Secretary was seated at the RH rear seat while his aide occupied the LH rear seat.

At 1512H, flight X4431 requested from Mactan Approach to climb to 6,500 feet and was instructed by Mactan Approach to maintain 2,500 feet until 20 miles (32.2 kms) out. At 1516H, X4431 reported that they were passing 2,300 feet. That was the last recorded communication of X4431 with Mactan Approach.

SURVIVOR’S ACCOUNT

Based on the account of the lone survivor, the aide of the Secretary, P/Sr. Insp. Abrazado, at about 23 minutes after airborne 1530H, the pilot informed them that they were experiencing an engine problem and told them “BAKA HINDI UMABOT ANG

PROPELLER NATIN SA NAGA, BALIK TAYO NG CEBU”. P/Sr. Insp. Abrazado further stated during the interview that the propeller was still turning at this time and the plane was still flying normally. It was at this juncture that he sent a SMS message from his mobile phone to one of the members of their group in Mactan that the aircraft has a propeller problem and they will be returning to Mactan and requested to provide airline booking for the Secretary and himself on the first available flight to Manila. Several minutes later, he sensed that the plane was changing direction and at

the same time noticed an orange light indicator at the instrument panel, initially blinking slowly, then increasingly faster. Suddenly, he heard a noise and saw the right hand propeller stopped at the same time the orange indicator light stopped blinking but steadily lit. When he asked the pilot if they were close to Cebu, the Capt. replied “MASBATE TAYO, MASBATE.” When he further asked how far they were from the airport, the person sitting at the right hand seat beside the Captain pointed to the screen at the instrument panel showing number “26”. When Abrazado asked again how many minutes more to Masbate airport, the person replied “FIFTEEN”. When the survivor was asked during the interview if the Captain attempted to restart the RH engine, he stated that the Captain tried to restart the dead engine three (3) times. He also stated that at that time the airplane was flying smoothly even with the RH engine not operating. Several minutes later Abrazado noticed that the airplane was descending to a critical level and it was at this time, approximately 1620H, that he sent a SMS to his commanding officer that they will be making an emergency landing in Masbate. Suddenly, he saw the runway at the left window of the airplane and noticed the position of the plane slowly veering to the left for the final approach to the runway but it seemed to him that the pilot miscalculated the runway and maneuvered the plane too late and they went past the runway. Then Abrazado looked at the pilot and he saw the latter turn his head to the right and glance to the rear over his right shoulder and remembered seeing his face turn red and eyes wide open (bulging). Then the airplane suddenly turned right and pitched upwards followed by a swift vertical nose dive.

MANILA AREA CONTROL CENTER RADAR DATA

Based on the data retrieved from the new Manila Area Control Center (MACC), flight X4431 appeared on the MACC radar display from take-off at MCIA and disappeared 9.12 nautical miles (16.89 kms) out thereafter. At 1607:11H, flight X4431 was picked up by radar and reappeared at the new Manila Area Control Center (MACC) display to be at an altitude of 4,000 feet with a heading of 353 degrees. At 1607:19H, the aircraft was still at 4,000 feet altitude, and heading of 340 degrees. At 1607:26H, the aircraft disappeared from the radar display and reappeared at 1607:30H, wherein the radar display showed the aircraft at an altitude of 3,900 feet and heading of 010 degrees. At 1607:31H, the aircraft was shown at 3,900 feet altitude with a heading of 356 degrees. Twenty four seconds later at 1607:55H, the aircraft was still at 3,900 feet altitude with a speed of 80 kts. This time, the aircraft was 33.7 kilometers (kms) from Masbate and 91.1 kms from Mactan. At 1608:01H, the aircraft was picked up by radar

at 3,900 feet altitude with speed of 70 kts and heading of 345 degrees. This was the last data picked up by the MACC before the aircraft disappeared from the radar display.

At 1625H, the aircraft was reported to have crashed at sea approximately 1.1 kms from the threshold of Masbate runway 21 and eventually sank into the bottom of the sea. Lat of 12° 23', 055" N and Long of 123° 38', 202" E

PROBABLE CAUSE

The Aircraft Accident Investigation and Inquiry Board determined that the probable cause of this accident was:

Immediate Cause Factor

- Failure of the pilot to control the aircraft during one engine inoperative approach and landing.
- Lack of training and experience of the pilot on one engine inoperative emergencies.

Contributory Factors

- Less than adequate maintenance resulting in the failure of the RH engine in-flight.
- Less than adequate training of the maintenance personnel on the PA-34-200 which led to the improper trouble shooting of the aircraft discrepancies.
- Failure of the CAAP Airworthiness Inspector to implement regulatory surveillance on the operations of Aviatour's when he signed the Test Flight Report with the Test Flight not being performed.
- Failure of the Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines to provide effective regulatory surveillance on the operations of Aviatour's when it issued the Certificate of Airworthiness based on fraudulent documents that did not reflect the actual condition/airworthiness of the aircraft.

SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of this investigation, the Aircraft Accident Investigation and Inquiry Board made the following safety recommendations:

- Require CAAP multi-engine check pilots to strictly implement all the required emergency procedures, most especially the emergency on one engine inoperative during renewal of licenses.
- CAAP to study the possibility of limiting Pilot ratings to a maximum of three (3) aircraft types.

- Ensure that AMO Personnel are properly trained and qualified on the aircraft and engine that they maintain.
- Require all CAAP Airworthiness Inspectors to strictly observe their duties and responsibilities.