

STATEMENT OF Walter Rogers
REGARDING NEAR MID AIR COLLISION
19NNE SBA
September 20, 2015 2227GMT

September 22, 2015

On the afternoon of Sunday September 20, 2015 I was flying my Discus 2A Schempp-Hirth glider out of Tehachapi California cruising along and climbing in thermals over the San Rafael Mountains north of Santa Barbara. Shortly after stopping to climb (right hand circles) in a thermal approximately 5nm East of San Rafael Mountain (19NNE SBA – 34.6989N 119.9644W), I encountered a King Air cruising from north to south. The aircraft crossed at my altitude of 11,000msl zero vertical difference and approximately 500feet to the east. No evasive action was taken either by myself or the King Air. My entire flight is documented with pressure altitude and lat/lon coordinates every second in an International Gliding Commission (IGC) file.

My glider, N53LK, was recently equipped with a Mode S Trig transponder which was operating at the time. A collision advisory system aboard my glider called FLARM did register an alarm for a rapidly approach Mode C or Mode S target. In fact, I did visually see the King Air BEFORE the alarm which was about 15 seconds before the near miss (FLARM advisory went off at about 10 seconds before). Because I could see that the King Air path was diverging from my own, I chose to make no evasive maneuver.

My concern which I'd like to have the FAA address is this: 1) Was the King Air being provided IFR or VFR Flight Advisory services? 2) Do the radar tracking logs show both aircraft at the time of close encounter? 3) Did the King Air report this close encounter or near mid air? 4) Do air traffic controllers have a warning or advisory annunciator when Mode C or Mode S targets convergence dangerously close? Because my transponder was recently installed and certified by an avionics shop last March, I am interested in determining visibility from ground radars. Gliders are currently exempt from carrying Mode C transponders below 18,000msl. Nonetheless, I have decided in the interest of safety that carrying one greatly increases the chances of avoiding mid air collisions. That is the reason I'm interested in receiving a report from the FAA on this encounter.

Walter Rogers

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