

Feb. 23, 2013- The Venice, FL. Airport "crash"

Ok, let me say right off that I had not intended to write an article about today's flight since it was to an airport that I had previously commented on (Dec. 19, 2012). Therefore, I had no camera with me other than the one built into my old I-phone G3, which is of very poor optical quality. However it did provide a "back up", of sorts, for capturing today's event... an airplane "crash".

It had been a bit over a month since my last flight to the Sun Coast Cafe located in the Venice FBO's facility and I hankered for another taste of their "stuffed French Toast". Besides it was an absolutely gorgeous South Florida winter morning and destined to get even better as the day warmed into the low 80's.

My flight, at 1,500 feet, took me over a very large man made object the likes of which I could not identify. It consisted of a series of man made "islands" separated by inter-connecting "canals" and accessed via a paved perimeter roadway. Each of these islands had a large building adjacent to it, which served as its entrance, and each of these buildings had high "winged" walls emanating from the structure, which prevented egress off of the island (other than through the building). Each island appeared to have some sort of wooden structure built on it. These varied in both size and shape and reminded me of a boardwalk type platform. While my phone camera could not capture much detail, this is obviously an engineered structure of some sort, and on a future flight I am going to try to find out just what it is. It obviously cost a lot of time and money to construct.

When I arrived at the Venice Airport, at about 10 AM, I was delighted to see that an aircraft "static" display & open house was in progress with aircraft ranging from light sport home-builts (such as mine) and older 1940's era trainers, through more modern general aviation airplanes and even a multi-million dollar business jet. Helicopters were giving rides and there were many people milling around just enjoying the day's festivities. I strolled the various airplanes, myself, after my breakfast meal, and was over at the self-serve fuel dock filling up my wing tanks when I heard an awful din coming from the general aviation parking ramp. Looking over I noticed a large "cabin class" airplane taxiing out in what sounded like a full power mode. "My God", I thought, "he is going to take off directly from the taxi-way", which leads out to one of the main runways. I assumed that this was the case due to the fact that the plane was under full power and achieving accelerated forward motion. Then, I realized that the taxi-way was 300 feet further behind the plane, which by then had reached a 35-45 MPH speed, when it suddenly slammed into a ditch adjacent to the taxi-way, The front gear flew off, the prop ground to a halt in the dirt and the right main gear collapsed. As people began running over to the wreck, I was still on the step-ladder securing my wing tank vent caps, so all I could do was to snap a couple of long range photos with my I-phone.

As I began my taxi over to the active runway I heard the sounds of the emergency equipment's sirens as they approached the ramp area. I later found out that the pilot had started the engine, but had left the airplane to check something, and, apparently, the throttles somehow went to full power, thus causing this million dollar Piper Malibu Mirage to accelerate and then crash.



This property must be at least 100 acres

This is the unknown property that I flew over



Boardwalk type structures

Buildings w/ winged gates

A close-up view of just two of the "Islands"



The "crash" site with the airplane circled in red



A very poor I-phone camera tele-photo image