

From: Heidi L'Esperance [mailto: [REDACTED]]

Sent: Monday, July 28, 2014 9:41 PM

To: Yeager Leah

Cc: [REDACTED]

Subject: Re: NTSB 6120.1 for for accident involving N9789W

Hello,

I apologize that I have not had time to touch base with all of you. In terms of what happened, from my perspective, regarding the accident.

That evening Pete & I decided to go out for a plane ride. When we got to the airport, we had to clean a birds nest out of our engine compartment. Following the removal of the bird's nest, Pete inspected the plane, like he always does, and could not find anything wrong with it and assured me that everything was fine with the plane. We got the plane out, and got into the plane and it would not start. This was a huge bummer as I think both Pete and I were looking forward to going, and we had recently replaced the battery or installed a charger or something along those lines and so had not anticipated the plane not starting being an issue. As we had hand-propped it in the past without issue, Pete looked over at me and asked me to hold the toe brakes while he hand propped it. In the past he has given me a briefing telling me to pull out the levers and turn the key off if I run into any issues, but I don't think he gave me this briefing this evening... or if he did, my memories of what happened next and the sheer terror of being in a runaway plane overshadow that briefing.

He got out to hand prop the plane, and I held down the toe brakes the same way that I had in the several other times we have had to hand prop the plane. The plane started, and then started moving. I remember getting really scared at this point because I saw Pete in front of me, and I remembered how dangerous he said hand-propping could be and I so scared that I was going to run over him or hit him with the prop. I remember him standing in front of me and getting that "oh, no" look in his face and thinking the same thing. I then remember turning the plane so that I would not hit him. I could not remember anything from the briefing he had said to do, only that I wanted to avoid hitting him. I did not want to hurt him, I was so scared.

The plane then started picking up speed, and felt like it wanted to take off. It felt like it was all that I could do to keep the plane on the ground, and I remember thinking that I need to keep this plane from going up into the sky because if that happens... I'm dead. I was so scared. I think these minutes from when the plane started to when it started trying to take off on me, are probably some of the most terrifying in my life as I felt so helpless, was playing the many ways this whole situation could end badly in my mind, and just wanted my dear husband in the plane with me as I knew that he would know what to do and I most certainly did not. I saw the planes ahead of me and tried to avoid them, but obviously was unsuccessful and did not take into account how wide the plane actually was.

I don't remember the crash or the moments immediately following. After the plane stopped, I remember Pete running through the field moments later, telling me to get out of the plane because of something about fuel. I was so scared/trembly that I could not unlatch the door and thought I was going to die. It is a very panic-y feeling to not be able to open a door when the thing might explode beneath you. He got me and our dog out of the plane safely and had me go a distance from the plane and sit down.

It was after getting out of the plane that I started to taste blood, feel dizzy/tired, and noticed the cuts/bruises. I was sore. I was told to put my head between my knees, and I did.

If you have any more questions, I would be happy to answer them either via email or phone. My schedule is a bit demanding and I never know when I might have a few minutes during the day to return calls, etc but if you are okay with a bit of unpredictability... I can try to call you back. My phone # is

[REDACTED]

Heidi

Heidi L'Esperance