

Record of the Swift airplane accident Weds April 12th 2017 at Williams Field (24IN) in Indiana by Peter Dugdale

Background: I have known Ren for 25+ years. He had been flying for 50+ years and owned multiple land/amphibian planes, built several experimental planes, and multiple balloons. Ratings CSEL&S, Inst, and balloon.

The Swift airplane had been repaired from a ground loop in June 2016 by Mike Williams which was completed and was ready for pick up. Ren had returned from his winter trip 4/7/17 so we chose 4/12/17 (good weather day) to fly down in my RV6 airplane and collect the Swift. We arrived ~12 noon EST (11am local time CST) and reviewed the Swift, then a thorough review of the log books. Both Ren and I read the entries to ensure they were accurate and signed. Ren wrote Mike a check for work outside of the insurance claim for [REDACTED]. We reviewed a BMW motor cycle there for repair. Ren asked if Mike would fly with him for a few take off and landings, he declined and advised going to an airport north which had a long runway (GEZ).

We then went to review the Swift again and prepare for departure. Mike provided 3-4 gallons of Avgas from a can, estimates were the tanks were ½ full. Discussion to top off at Shelbyville Municipal Airport (GEZ). Mike stated he had warmed the engine up that morning and taxied it a few minutes. Total run time and previous taxing was ~30-40 mins since engine reman. Discussion for Ren to take off first and then fly convoy to GEZ so we chose radio frequency 123.45 for air to air communication in case of a problem. Ren wanted a few minutes to re-familiarize himself in the cockpit and pre-flight the plane. Mike stayed close by and was talking to Ren while I went to my plane to prepare for takeoff. I hear Ren start his engine after ~5 mins so I start up mine. After another ~5 mins Ren does not come on frequency and waves to indicate a problem. I go over to his plane and he indicates he does not hear me. Also a light misfire at idle. I suggest does a run up, I stand back and he rev's it up under load for 1.5 – 2 mins. Misfire is gone. He suggests to depart and he will follow me to GEZ and we will work on the radio issue there. He taxi's ahead of me by ~ 2mins to depart the north bound runway 5, I think. He started his roll as I past by, I turned into position and observed his take off. The swift accelerated straight and normal, tail came up, continued accelerating and flew cleanly off the ground (no bouncing, aka above stall). The climb continued normally, at ~35' above the ground (AGL) the plane rolled left which continued to ~75' AGL at which time the plane wings were near vertical. The swift continued to roll at a constant rate going partially inverted and into the trees. The roll was smooth and appeared a constant rate and no attempts to correct it. I didn't observe any puffs of smoke from the exhaust indicating a miss fire. Estimate time 12:50 EST. The weather was clear, winds ~5 mph from the NW, not an issue.

I then taxied down the runway to where I thought was close to the impact. I shut down and started walking towards the woods when Mike Williams helper/worker drove over on a motor cycle and indicated the accident location was south of my location and provided a ride. I

could see the swift from the edge of the woods in a ~12' deep ravine, I approached the swift from the west side which had the easiest approach while calling for Ren. I could not see him or in the cockpit as the plane was against a tree. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] I then left the area back to the edge of the woods. The first sheriff arrived <5 mins, [REDACTED], she received instruction over the radio to secure the area so left the area.