



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Samantha Link
Aviation Accident Investigator
Central Region

Date: July 29, 2021
Person Contacted: Mr. James Gray (Pilot of the RV-8, N747JG)
NTSB Accident Number: WPR21LA336

Narrative:

During a telephone conversation with Mr. Gray he reported the following:

The purpose of the flight was to land and attend the Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA) AirVenture airshow, in Oshkosh, Wisconsin. Air traffic control cleared the four-airplane formation flight to land on runway 27. The airplanes were in a tight formation and landed at the same time on opposite sides of the runway. Air traffic control said to turn left onto the grass, and Mr. Gray initiated the turn “without regarding the airplane behind me.” The airplane behind him impacted his airplane’s rudder, then right wing/aileron.

This group of pilots have been flying in formation on and off for about 10 years. They used to land in a line, fade to the outside of the runway to slow, then turn onto the taxiway. Recently, they changed to a staggered style landing, where they land close to each other, but on opposite sides of the runway. At their home airport, they have access to a very long runway. Therefore, they have an extra long rollout before turning to the taxiway. It was not until after the accident that they realized landing for the airshow doesn’t have the same luxury. There are many color coded landing spots on each runway, and some taxiways are turned into runways just for the airshow. The atmosphere is very quick paced and there are so many airplanes.

Mr. Gray mentioned that they do not have a specific set of written procedures or manuals for their flying group since there are a group of four who fly regularly. However, they do follow the national standard for Formation Flying Inc (FFI) and use their guidelines and procedure manuals.

At the end of our conversation, we discussed ways to prevent this accident from happening again. The following items were discussed:

- Their formation was too tight for landing in such a fast paced, busy environment. Therefore, they will be increasing the distance between each other to ensure each pilot has about 3-4 seconds of time to process and react as needed.
- For airshow arrivals they will no longer conduct a staggered landing. Their airshow procedure will be for everyone to land on the centerline and fade to the exit side, leaving the other side of the runway open for any issues that may arise.
- Before attending future airshows, they are going to practice mimicking the airshow environment. Which will include landing quickly, ensuring adequate space, fading to one side, and a quick/early turn to the taxiway.
- They presented their story and lessons learned with Formation and Safety Team (FAST)
- They presented their story and lessons learned with Formation Flying Inc. (FFI)

END.

Submitted by: Samantha Link