



RECORD OF MEMORANDUM

Samantha Link
Aviation Accident Investigator
Central Region

Date: January 29, 2022
Person Contacted: Mr. Nick Halatsis (Federal Aviation Administration)
NTSB Accident Number: CEN22LA114

Narrative:

Mr. Halatsis wrote the below summary of his in-person meeting with the pilot, Mr. Derek Udovich:

PIC:

IT WAS A NICE DAY HE WAS GOING TO FLY WITH HIS 8 YEAR OLD SON. HIS AIRPLANE WAS ON TWO MAIN MOUNT SKIS, THAT WE DISCOVERED HE HAD MOUNTED HIMSELF, AND THE TAILWHEEL. THE PIC HAD JUST GOTTEN HIS PILOT'S LICENSE THIS SUMMER. THIS WAS ABOUT HIS 10TH FLIGHT WITH THE AIRCRAFT SINCE HE PUT THE SKIS ON IT. HE USES THE SNOW COVERED GRASS BETWEEN HIS RAMP AND THE RUNWAY TO TAKE OFF. ON THIS DAY HE WAS TAKING OFF TO THE WEST, RUNWAY LINEUP IS 31 IN THAT DIRECTION. THE WIND SOCK IS VERY VISIBLE IN FRONT OF HIM FOR TAKEOFF. IN FACT HIS NORMAL TAKEOFF PATH IS TO GO BETWEEN THE WINDSOCK AND THE HANGARS. PRIOR TO TAKEOFF ON THIS DAY THE PIC DECIDED TO TAXI THROUGH THE FRESH 8 INCHES OF SNOW, TWICE, IN AN ATTEMPT TO PACK DOWN SOME SKI TRACKS AND MAKE A MAKESHIFT RUNWAY. HE STATED THIS ALSO HELPS HIM OUT TO LAND IN THAT HE CAN SEE THE TRACKS FOR THE LANDING LINEUP.

ON THE TAKEOFF ROLL, AT ROTATION SPEED, HE HEARD AND FELT A WHACK. THE AIRCRAFT DID NOT YAW, BUT HAD A QUICK LONGITUDNAL BUMP/DECEL, A JERK AFT AND DOWN, TO WHICH THE PIC IMMEDIATELY PULLED THE AIRCRAFT OFF THE DECK. HE STATED IT WAS AN AGGRESSIVE PULL AND THE AIRCRAFT WENT NOSE HIGH, THE CONTROLS GOT MUSHY, "I WAS GOING TO STALL IT, AND SO I PUSHED THE NOSE OVER". THE PIC WAS ABLE TO LEVEL THE AIRCRAFT. HE LOOKED DOWN TO THE RIGHT THROUGH HIS CLEAR PLEXIGLASS DOOR AND COULD SEE THE RIGHT SKI HANGING STRAIGHT DOWN, THE LEFT SKI WAS NOT VISIBLE THROUGH THE SOLID WALL. HE PASSED TO THE RIGHT OF THE WIND SOCK, JUST ABOUT THE SAME HEIGHT OF IT (APPROX. 20-25FT), CROSSED THE RAMP AND SAW THE TREES IN FRONT OF HIM, SO HE PUT IT DOWN IN THE SNOW. DIRECTION WAS, FOR THE MOST PART, STRAIGHT AHEAD FROM TAKE OFF. THE AIRCRAFT TOUCHED DOWN, SLID ABOUT 20 FT, CREATING A SNOW CLOUD, AND CAME TO A FULL STOP. THE PIC RETRIEVED HIS SON FROM THE BACK SEAT, BOTH WERE UNINJURED. A SKID-STEER LOADER WAS USED TO PICK UP THE AIRCRAFT AND PLACE IT IN A HANGAR.

POST DAMAGE INSPECTION SHOWED:

- DOUBLE WING STRUTS ON BOTH WINGS, ABOUT 3 FEET FROM THE FUSELAGE, WERE ALL BENT.
- LEFT WING INSPECTION PANEL HAD POPPED OUT AND UPPER SURFACE SHOWED 45 DEGREE WRINKLING.
- GEAR WAS RIPPED OFF AND THE BOTTOM OF FUSELAGE, ALTHOUGH ONLY VISIBLE FROM THE SIDES AS IT WAS SITTING ON THE BELLY, SHOWED SIGNIFICANT DAMAGE.
- PROP BLADES WERE ALL BENT FROM THE PROP STRIKE.

PRIOR TO THE FLIGHT THERE WERE NO ANOMOLIES OR ABNORMALITIES TO REPORT REGARDING THE AIRCRAFT. THIS WAS THE MOST SNOW THAT THE PIC HAD EVER ATTEMPTED TO TAKE OFF WITH. THE PIC DID MENTION A FEW TIMES THAT HE DOES HAVE A POWERFUL ENGINE IN THE PLANE.

THE PIC WAS ASKED WHAT HE WOULD DO IN THE FUTURE TO TAKE OFF FROM THAT AREA. HE STATED HE WOULD GET THE SNOWMOBILES OUT, DRAG A HEAVY SLED OR PALLET AND PACK IT DOWN PRIOR TO A TAKE OFF ATTEMPT. IT WAS DISCUSSED THAT THE DAY PRIOR YOU MAY HAVE WALKED OUT AND THERE WOULD BE ICE CHUNKS AND FROZEN DRIFTS THAT HAD BEEN FREEZING UP FOR THE LAST MONTH, BUT NOW ON THIS MORNING YOU HAD 8 INCHES OF FRESH SNOW, AND IT ALL LOOKS CLEAN AND LEVEL. THERE COULD BE NUMEROUS UNKNOWN HAZARDS HIDDEN UNDER 8 INCHES OF FRESH SNOW.

END.

Submitted by: Samantha Link