

June 20, 2014

Sentimental Journey Fly-In

Aircraft Operations Group

Accident Report

Prepared by: Ben R. Coleman

On Friday, June 20, 2014, at 1624 local time, a Taylor Cub J-2, N16667, owned by Mark Stewart of Ocala, Florida, collided with terrain soon after takeoff from grass runway 27 at William T. Piper Memorial Airport, Lock Haven, PA. The aircraft was flown to Lock Haven to take part in the annual Sentimental Journey Fly-In. The aircraft had been fitted that day with a unique single blade propeller. Details on the installation are unknown at this time. There was no flight plan filed as the flight was intended to be a local VFR flight for the purpose of allowing a renowned Piper Cub expert, Steve Krog, the experience of flying the single blade propeller.

Several eye witnesses, including this investigator, observed the aircraft, N16667, taxi to the grass runway 27 and begin the takeoff roll. Winds were light and variable from the west. The aircraft did not appear to be accelerating compared to other J-2 flights on previous days. Approximately 1,000 feet down the runway the aircraft appeared to struggle lifting off the ground. The aircraft did eventually lift off with very little climb rate over the end of the runway. At about 100' AGL, the aircraft made a well-coordinated right bank to the north when it began a gradual descent until it disappeared below the roofline of several houses. During the northbound descent, there appeared to be faint smoke trail from the aircraft. Time mark was recorded at 1624 local. Local airport manager and emergency services were notified that the aircraft had gone down near Main Street and there was no apparent fire.

At that point, the Unicom Post (Operations Tower) became the Incident Command Center for this accident. Initial responders to the crash site reported back to the command center that the pilot was uninjured and the aircraft was substantially damaged with no fire. All communications were controlled by the Aircraft Operations Chairman Ben Coleman (writer). The accident was called in to FAA flight services by witness Steve Alcorn and the NTSB Com Center was notified by Ben Coleman. The NTSB dispatched this witness to the IIC, Mr. Steve Stein. Mr. Stein was briefed on the events that had occurred within the previous 30 minutes and my background as an NTSB investigator and FAA inspector (retired). In that the pilot was not injured and there was no property damage other than the aircraft, I requested permission to move the wreckage to the airport using all appropriate accident investigation protocols. NTSB Stein coordinated with FAA Harrisburg FSDO Tim Inns and called me at 1737 local with authorization to move the wreckage to a secure location for follow-up investigation on Monday by Mr. Inns.

Arrangements were made with the airport manager, Ed Watson, for a location to store the wreckage and Sentimental Journey VP of Operations, John Spencer, secured his personal trailer and met me at the crash site.

I arrived at the crash site [REDACTED] Lock Haven and introduced myself to the Fire Department Commander and City Manager. I explained that authorization had been received from the FAA and NTSB to move the wreckage under my care. They assisted with the removal of the wreckage.

Once at the accident site, the aircraft was observed in a 45 degree nose down attitude on a heading of 275 degrees. It had collided with a 4 foot chain link fence, apple tree and a blue 10X10 wooden storage shed with asphalt shingles. The aircraft was engulfed by the apple tree. The fire department personnel were asked to cut limbs away with a chain saw to gain access.

The propeller blade was splintered and tangled into the fence. Photo taken. The nose section of the aircraft appeared to have little to no damage. There was a slight drip of fluid that had the aroma of 100LL Avgas. The drip was measured at one drip per 8 seconds. A fuel spill mat was placed under the drip. The responding firemen stated that the pilot had turned the fuel control valve "Off". A series of photos were taken at cardinal points and all aspects of the aircraft were located at the crash site.

The pilot had been seated in the rear seat as normal operations for a J-2 and it was equipped with shoulder harnesses. The harnesses were intact and the pilot harness latch mechanism was not damaged. Flight control continuity was confirmed in all axis's. The engine was not rotated to preserve that function for the official investigation.

The aircraft was carefully pulled down from the tree and off the wooden shed. The fuel drip continued and was traced to the carburetor. A mason jar was used to contain the fuel that appeared clear and light blue in color. I gained access to the fuel shut off and found it had not been fully closed. I turned the control until the valve was seated and fuel leak stopped.

John Spencer returned to the scene with a red fuel container that had been used for kerosene and the aircraft fuel tank was siphoned. There was approximately four gallons removed from the tank after a photo was taken of the fuel tab gauge. The red fuel container was placed on the trailer.

After verifying there was control continuity for the second time, the control cables cut by John Spencer. The wings were unbolted and removed. The landing gear was unbolted and removed. The windscreen and side window was placed on the trailer and the aircraft was relocated to hangar 2 at KLHV operations.

More information will be provided upon the direct official investigation as required.

1. View North

Left wing tip bow section with fabric lodged in chain link fence.



2. View East



3. View West



4. View South



5. Propeller blade trapped in chain link fence



6. Forward Cockpit



7. Data Plate



8. FAA Registration

REGISTRATION NOT TRANSFERABLE		This certificate must be in the aircraft when operated.	
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION - FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION CERTIFICATE OF AIRCRAFT REGISTRATION			
NATIONALITY AND REGISTRATION MARK: N 1156Z	AIRCRAFT SERIAL NO. 682		
MANUFACTURER AND MODEL/TYPE DESIGNATION OF AIRCRAFT TAYLOR J-2			
ICAO Aircraft Address Code: 50205502			
ISSUED TO	STEWART MARLOW OCALA, FL 34481-1120		This certificate is issued for registration purposes only and is not a certificate of title. The Federal Aviation Administration does not determine ownership of aircraft between private persons.
	Individual		
It is hereby certified that the above described aircraft has been entered on the register of the Federal Aviation Administration, United States of America, in accordance with the Convention on International Civil Aviation dated December 7, 1944, and with Title 49, United States Code, and regulations issued thereunder.			
DATE OF ISSUE	August 9, 2006	34481-1120 ADMINISTRATOR	
EXPIRATION DATE	July 31, 2015		
U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Aviation Administration			

9. Standard Airworthiness Certificate

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
FAA
STANDARD AIRWORTHINESS CERTIFICATE

NO. 24467	TAYLOR - CUB	652	FORMAL
-----------	--------------	-----	--------

None

08-30-96

DAR-109-F7-50

FAA Form 8100-2-94

U.S. GPO: 1994-50

10. Registration number



12. Damaged single blade propeller. Hub mechanism is not damaged.



13. Fuel captured prior to closing the fuel shut off valve



14. Loaded on trailer and preparing to transport



15. Hangar 2, Lock Haven William T. Piper Memorial Airport

