



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

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Eastern Region

Date: December 19, 2018
Person Contacted: Jon G. McGowan
NTSB Accident Number: ERA18LA023

Narrative:

Mr. McGowan was contacted by phone on November 17, 2017, at 0845 EST. He was called at [REDACTED]

At the beginning of the phone call he was advised that the NTSB is a federal agency mandated by Congress to investigate aircraft accidents, and NTSB has no authority to take any action against any individual. He was also informed that the purpose of an NTSB investigation is for safety only, and any person NTSB talks with has the right to representation; he agreed to the interview without representation.

He provided a home address of [REDACTED] Northfield, MA [REDACTED] and his e-mail address is [REDACTED]. He is an engineer by schooling.

His pilot certificate number is [REDACTED]. He provided a Basic Med date of [REDACTED]. He indicated that his [REDACTED] is [REDACTED] which results in a [REDACTED] but he can control his [REDACTED].

The airplane is based at Orange Municipal Airport (ORE), Orange, Massachusetts. He has owned the airplane since 1991 (FAA records later indicated he purchased it on October 4, 1991). Since owning it, he has operated it for about 1,500 hours, and excluding the accident flight, has not had any issues with the heel operated Cleveland brakes, which were the brakes installed at manufacture. He has been using the same mechanic since 1991 to perform his annual inspection. He did report an issue about 10 years ago in which while taxiing for fuel on a downsloping portion of the airport, the airplane "sunk in" and went onto its nose.

On November 1, 2017, he flew the airplane to 0B5 for an annual inspection; arriving there in the morning. He stayed at the airport and did an owner assisted annual inspection removing panels

and assisting the mechanic with a bleed check of the brakes. With respect to the bleed check, he was in the cockpit with the bleed screw at each reservoir while the mechanic pumped fluid from each brake. He noted fluid coming from each bleed screw. He also reported the brake pads of the left brake were replaced. At the end of the day, a helper picked him up at 0B5 and drove him home.

He provided the following timeline and information for November 2, 2017 –

The annual inspection was completed the morning of November 2, 2017. He arrived at 0B5 about 1330, and upon arrival, the airplane was parked outside. He paid the mechanic for the annual inspection, and performed a preflight inspection of the airplane paying particular attention to the amount of oil in the engine. Because the wheel pants were removed, he was able to see the brakes and did inspect them. He did not notice any fluid on the ground beneath either brake, but did check the brake pad thickness. He also inspected the rudder cables. He then started the engine briefly, secured the engine and checked for oil leaks but did not find any. About 1400, he called the ASOS at KORE using his iPhone. The ORE reported weather conditions were clear skies, with 10 miles visibility.

He then got back into the airplane into the rear seat, started the engine, and began taxiing towards the approach end of runway 16, for the intended flight to ORE; he did not have a flight plan filed. Using differential braking, he made a right turn and then a left turn, noting there were no issues with the brakes. He taxied past his flight instructor and said hello to him on the radio. While at the approach end of the runway, he performed an engine run-up which included a check of the magnetos. There were no issues with the brakes. He reported the wind was calm, and overcast skies existed.

While wearing a cap with headset, goggles, and lapbelt and shoulder harness, he announced on the common traffic advisory frequency that he was departing runway 16 with a straight out departure, and taxied onto the runway. During the takeoff roll with no wind, and 25 gallons of fuel on-board, he began accelerating on runway centerline with ailerons neutral and raised the tail. While on the ground between 50 and 60 mph, which was near rotation speed, the airplane suddenly and uncommanded “shot to the left.” He applied right rudder but did not reduce power, and was unable to correct. The airplane departed the left side of the runway, rolled into a gully, impacted a wing on the ground, and then nosed over. He exited the airplane, and had to sign a waiver for the ambulance indicating he did not need to be transported to a hospital. He did have his left foot on the heel brakes at the time of the on-ground loss of control.

His injuries included [REDACTED] He also impacted the control stick.

There were no skid marks on the runway associated with the left main landing gear tire, while there were faint skid marks on the runway from the right main landing gear tire. Postaccident he also inspected the rudder cables and noted they were intact. He reported he did not feel any pulling while taxiing or during the takeoff roll. One axle was bent/collapsed, which may have been caused when the airplane rolled into the gully.

A video taken at the airport of the takeoff depicts the airplane tracking straight down the runway, then depicted the sharp left turn. He did not think wind was a factor in the accident.

The night of the accident, the airplane was moved from where it came to rest. It subsequently has been moved to Colonial Air, in New Bedford, MA, where it is being stored. The insurance company will total the airplane.

The digest was e-mailed to him for review on August 17, 2018. He did not reply.