

Accident 12/16/17

Stephen Merritt told me on Friday evening that Noah had been on a cross country to Ahoskie NC with his Cessna 150 and it had a forced landing in a field near the airport on his way back. It was explained to me that when Noah reduced power to descend, he could not bring the power back up again and was forced to land in a field. Saturday morning, Stephen told me that he surmised that maybe it was a throttle linkage problem and then about 45 min later told me that it was a loose adel clamp. He asked me to come out to the airport to take a look. Around 1pm that afternoon I arrived at LHZ and got into the airport van with Stephen, Dave Stange and his son Noah, and we drove to the field in which the plane had landed. When we got there we took the cowling off and we looked over the engine. I did not see anything wrong nor any linkage or adel clamp loose. I then thought maybe some water was in the system since the plane is parked outside, so I drained the gascolator into a bucket to check. There was no water or debris in the gas. Stephen, seeing nothing wrong, got into the plane and started it up. It started and it ran well. He ran it at full power for a few minutes and completed a run-up. He shutdown, said he was happy with the plane that it was running fine. We put the cowling back on. Stephen got back into the plane, started up, taxied to the far corner of the field and performed another run-up. At the end of that run-up, he started the take off run and appear to be making a sweeping left turn take-off to avoid the power lines. He broke ground continuing the left turn, climbed about a hundred feet, almost 180 degrees from the starting point. The plane sounded normal, when it appeared to stall, the left wing dropped and the plane impacted the ground at full power. Dave, Noah and I rushed to the plane and quickly pulled Stephen out through the passenger side door as the engine started to catch fire. We got him a safe distance away and waited on EMS to show up. Several firefighters showed up in pickup trucks and assisted Dave in caring for Stephen until the ambulance showed up. Then several fire trucks showed up and one of them put out the engine fire.

Chris Welch A&P Mechanic

From: [REDACTED]
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Accident on 12-16-2017
Date: Wednesday, December 20, 2017 4:20:38 PM

Dear Sirs:

On December 16th we drove out to the field where the aircraft was located with Steve and Chris. The aircraft checked out good after several run ups. Steve walked the field and made a plan for his takeoff. His plan was to liftoff clear the ditch fly under the power lines and proceed to KLHZ. After liftoff the aircraft pitched up and rolled left all the way back to the ground under power. We did not see any attempt by Steve to recover. After impact the aircraft engine caught fire so we pulled Steve out of the cockpit and administered first aid until the first responders arrived.



Capt Dave Stange, CAP



U.S. Air Force Auxiliary
gocivilairpatrol.com



From:

To:

Subject:

Date:

Accident on 12-16-2017

Wednesday, December 20, 2017 4:14:49 PM

Dear Sirs:

On Friday, December 15th, about [4:30 pm](#) I was flying back to KLHZ on a cross country when I hit turbulence. I pulled the throttle back to lose some airspeed but when I pushed it back in it stayed at idle. I checked fuel, mags, mixture etc, with no response so I found a suitable field and landed with no damage to the aircraft.

On December 16th we drove out to the field where the aircraft was located with Steve and Chris. The aircraft checked out good after several run ups. Steve walked the field and made a plan for his takeoff. His plan was to liftoff clear the ditch fly under the power lines and proceed to KLHZ. After liftoff the aircraft pitched up and rolled left all the way back to the ground under power. We did not see any attempt by Steve to recover. After impact the aircraft engine caught fire so we pulled Steve out of the cockpit and administered first aid until the first responders arrived.

Noah Stange

RECORD OF ☐ VISIT ☐ CONFERENCE OR ☒ TELEPHONE CALL	TIME 8:40 EST	DATE 12/19/17												
NAME (S) OF PERSON (S) CONTACTED OR IN CONFERENCE AND LOCATION	ROUTING <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <th style="width: 50%;">SYMBOL</th> <th style="width: 50%;">INITIALS</th> </tr> <tr><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td><td> </td></tr> </table>		SYMBOL	INITIALS										
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Dave Strange														
SUBJECT														
Witness to N7929Z crash														
DIGEST														
On December 18, 2017 at 8:40 am, Inspector Mike Allen and I called Dave Stange to get his testimony of what he saw on the day of the crash. Dave is the father of Noah Strange the 16 year old who landed N7929Z in the field when he had engine trouble during his cross country. Here is Dave's statement. Noah was on his way back from a solo cross country flight to Louisburg . He was flying at an altitude of 3000 feet when he encountered air turbulence. Noah pulled the throttle back to slow down. Noah had said that he could not get the engine back so he landed in the field. Noah came in with extra speed which aided him in getting over a ditch in the field. Noah landed with no damage to the aircraft. On Saturday 12/16/2017 Dave arrived at the field with his son Noah, Stephen Merrit, the owner of the aircraft, the owner of the field and a mechanic. The mechanic took the cowling off to check the engine. He couldn't find anything so they started the engine to do a run-up. The engine ran fine. They mentioned it could have been a stuck float in the carburetor that caused the engine failure. Then he heard Steve stating his plan of getting the aircraft out of the field. Steve stated he would make a left hand turn on the takeoff roll, pop it off here and fly out over there. Steve wanted to go left of the trees at the end of the field and fly underneath the high tension power lines toward a clearing. Dave stated he did not see any control inputs when the plane came off the ground. Dave stated that he did see the rudder work while Steve was taxiing the airplane. He also stated that when the plane came off the ground it looked like a Hammerhead Stall before it hit the ground.														
CONCLUSION, ACTION TAKEN, OR REQUIRED														
This statement from Dave Strange is true to my knowledge and recollection.														
DATE 12/19/2017	TITLE ASI Corey Paczkowski	SIGNATURE 												

Record of Conversation

Name: John Pearce
Address:
Phone: [REDACTED]
Date: 12/17/2017
Description: Owner of property for N7929Z accident scene

Interviewed Mr. Jon Pearce in regards to what he witnessed in regards to the accident of N7929Z on 12/16/2017:

Mr. Pearce stated he arrived at the scene around 02:15 p.m. the afternoon of December 16, 2017. He stated there were 4 people (later identified as Steve Merritt, Dave Stange, Noah Stange, Chris Welsh) standing beside the aircraft and after they introduced their selves' they proceeded to say the aircraft landed there the day before around 04:30 in the afternoon. The "teenager" (Noah Stange) stated the aircraft lost power and made an emergency landing there in the field. Mr. Pearce stated they began to remove the cowlings from the aircraft. He stated the mechanic (Chris Welsh) was attempting to remove a "plug" from the carburetor but said he was afraid it was going to break off so instead he took a pair of channel locks and tapped the carb and said the float must have been stuck. He stated the pilot (Steve Merritt) got in the aircraft and started the engine to make a run up and the other guy (Dave Stange) timed him for two minutes and then shut down. He stated the pilot said all seemed normal and instructed the mechanic to put the cowlings back on and he was going to take off. He stated after it was put back together the pilot taxied to the end of the field and attempted the takeoff which ended in the crash. He stated after the crash he called 911 and approached the aircraft to help Mr. Merritt. Mr. Donnie Miller was with Mr. Pearce at the time and also stated after the crash he helped pull Mr. Merritt from the wreckage as Mr. Pearce went to the main road to meet EMS. Mr. Pearce stated it appeared when he first got to the field that Mr. Merritt had just arrived. He stated he made the 911 call at 02:44 pm. Mr. Pearce also recorded the takeoff and crash on his phone and provided me with the video upon departure.

Mike Allen
Aviation Safety Inspector