

From: Keith Kimberly, Contract ATAC Pilot
To: Michael Marchelletta, FAA Aviation Safety Inspector
Peter Wentz, NTSP Investigator

Subj: Details surrounding the incident at KPHF airport on May 9, 2019 regarding ATAC aircraft N343AX a Hawker Hunter.

1. On 9 May 2019 I was the pilot of aircraft N343AX conducting a routine training flight that included two aircraft total. The other aircraft was another ATAC Hawker Hunter that was there as a chase aircraft due to this being my first solo flight in the Hawker Hunter. The other aircraft's role was as safety observer and evaluator.
2. The flight was on an IFR flight plan that was subsequently cancelled once airborne to proceed VFR with flight following. After flying down to Kitty Hawk we returned to KPHF where a visual straight-in approach was asked for and approved. At the completion of the touch and go I asked for, and received, clearance to stay in the VFR pattern at KPHF.
3. After the second touch and go I raised the gear and noticed that the right main mount had an unsafe up indication. I then lowered the gear which subsequently gave a three down and locked indication. Approximately 15 seconds later the hydraulic caution light came on which indicated reduced hydraulic pressure. The chase plane noticed fluid leaking from the right side of the aircraft. I then went through the emergency checklist for a hydraulic failure along with declaring an emergency with KPHF tower. I decided to execute a no-flap landing which required an approach speed of 180kts.
4. On downwind approaching the departure end of runway 25 I noticed the hydraulics were at 1300psi with no associated degradation in control of the aircraft. I also looked at the right landing gear as best I could and did not notice anything wrong. The chase aircraft also did not note anything wrong with the landing gear.
5. I extended on downwind a little to increase the final approach portion. Once on final at about a mile from touchdown the elevator hydraulics failed which made for heavy fore and aft stick forces but the aircraft was still very controllable. ½ mile from touchdown the aileron hydraulics failed, once again the stick forces were heavy but the aircraft was very controllable.
6. As I was crossing the threshold I reduced power to land and slowed to about 160kts at touchdown. The landing was extremely smooth and soft but the right main mount collapsed. The chute was immediately streamed and full left rudder applied with left brake as the aircraft veered right. As the aircraft left the paved surface I secured the engine. The aircraft continued off the runway and onto the grass between runway 25 and 20 then it crossed runway 20 perpendicular to the runway then onto the grass between runway 20 and the taxiway. The aircraft came to rest in a water drainage ditch where I turned off the electrical power to the aircraft, I unstrapped and secured the ejection seat. Once out of the aircraft I walked over to meet with one of the crash crew and then walked back to the aircraft and pinned the upper portion of the ejection seat. I then walked around the aircraft to survey the damage and check to ensure there was no fire.
7. After a few hours and a completed interview with the Virginia State Police I returned to the ATAC building located at the southwest side of the airport.

Respectfully Submitted, Keith Kimberly

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5/9/2019

KPHF RWY 25, Winds 220/7, Takeoff at 0931 and land at 1023 (KLFI)

ATAC 31 Grumpy 343, TF-4, 8 a side on preflight

ATAC 32 FEBE 340, Chase, 10-11 a side on preflight

Brief started at 0800 in briefing space and ended at 0830

Walked 40 minutes prior to planned takeoff at 0915, I bumped up at the takeoff time to 0915 verbally but we ended up taking off on scheduled time of 0930.

When we walked, I looked out on the ramp and the jets that were uncovered were 340 and 343, not the jets that were on the Flight Schedule. We were supposed to be in 339 and 340 respectively. When we walked in to Maintenance to read the books, I told Grumpy that I would take 343 and he could take 340 but Ren said that the fuel loads were opposite. On the schedule, the chase aircraft was supposed to have internal plus 300gal and the other aircraft was supposed to have internal plus 200gal. So, in the end I took 340 and Grumpy took 343. We discussed all the gripes that were in 343's book to include the nose gear unsafe condition. I flew 343 on May 8th and had an unsafe gear indication after I raised the gear on a low approach. I lowered the gear and saw three green gear indications and made a full stop. I did not notice any HYD problems after the gear came down. Grumpy was aware of the gear unsafe indication that I had the day prior.

We took off and headed down the coast while cancelling IFR and proceeding VFR with flight following. We turned around at Kitty Hawk and headed back to Turet and then on to the visual straight in to runway 25. After the straight in approach, Grumpy did a touch and go and we then went into the VFR pattern. We did two touch and goes from the VFR pattern when Grumpy reported that he had an unsafe nose indication. We stayed below 250kts and I crossed under his airplane to look at the nose gear. I noted that the nose wheel was up but then also noticed that there was a fluid that was spraying from what seemed to be the right wheel well. Grumpy stated that he was going to lower the landing gear and when he did he said it was slow to come down and that he still had an unsafe main indication. As we leveled off on downwind, Grumpy reported that he had three green indications.

I already had the HYD failure checklist opened and going through that. I called base to inform base that 343 had a HYD failure and that we were setting up for a straight in here at PHF. I asked Grumpy what he was seeing on the HYD gauge and he reported 1100psi. He had not reported that the flight controls were in manual or that he had a HYD light yet. We extended off of the 180 and were already configured for the approach. Grumpy asked if he could lower the flaps and I told him no. We would do a no-flap straight in approach. I said that the approach speed would be 180-190kts. He rogered that up and said that he would fly 190kts on the approach but that he would slow to 180 as he crossed the threshold. Soon after, he said that he saw a white elevator MI and he had a HYD light. I immediately told him that he would need to use pitch trim to help with the nose attitude in the flare. I also said that if he lost the aileron that he would need rudder to counter any roll off due to the crosswinds.

His approach looked smooth and as I leveled off at 250', and he continued down into ground effect. I estimate that he touched down around 1500' down the runway. His touch down looked to be smooth and I saw the chute deploy. He then started to drift to the right side of the runway and I saw a flash coming from the right side of the jet. I thought he may have hit something as he departed the runway. From short final on, there was no more comm between Grumpy and I. I watched him come to a complete stop on the grass on the opposite side of runway 2/20. I diverted to Langley and made a full stop there.