



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Timothy W. Monville
Sr. Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region

Date: October 20, 2020
Person Contacted: David A. Muse
NTSB Accident Number: ERA21LA027

Narrative:

Mr. David A. Muse contacted the NTSB Response Operation Center (NTSB ROC) on October 20, 2020, at 0816 EDT. The NTSB ROC put Mr. Muse on the call with investigator Monville. Mr. Muse provided a cell phone of [REDACTED], and an e-mail address of [REDACTED].

At the beginning of the 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.

The airplane was not equipped with a ballistic recovery parachute system. While on the phone he looked up Google Earth and identified the approximate accident site location, which was 35.208012°N and -85.89325°W.

With respect to the damage, he reported that he hit a tree that damaged 1 wing causing a fuel leak. The right wing main spar wing attachment point at the fuselage was fractured and separated as a result of the accident. He sustained banged shins.

He provided a home address of [REDACTED], South Carolina. He was the builder/owner, and pilot. He holds a Sport Pilot certificate, certificate number [REDACTED] issued September 29, 2018. Operating as a Sport Pilot he uses his driver license. He has 159+ hours total time, and 97.8 hours in make and model. He was currently working on the NTSB 6120 (Previous version of the Pilot/Operator Aircraft Accident/Incident Report).

With respect to October 14, 2020, he reported the following timeline –
He was on a flight from Lawrenceburg-Lawrence County Airport (2M2), Lawrenceburg, Tennessee, to Winchester Municipal Airport (BGF), Winchester, Tennessee, for fuel. While en-route to BGF he realized the single runway was closed due to repaving. He diverted to the Franklin County Airport (UOS), Sewanee, Tennessee. He landed uneventfully and filled the fuel tanks having 24 gallons on-board at departure. He checked the weather and noted it was reported to be from the north at about 10 knots, but at the field the wind was calm.

Before departure to Mark Anton Airport (2A0), Dayton, Tennessee, he performed a thorough preflight inspection while doing so with a local individual present. The preflight check included the flight controls and no discrepancies were reported. After engine start he taxied to runway 06, then taxied onto the runway and initiated takeoff. When he got to midfield with trees on either side of the runway, he encountered a wind gust and downdraft from a rotor from the trees. He continued and at the end of the runway he noted he no longer had the option to land, even though his airplane was short takeoff and landing (STOL). He tried to climb but could not out climb the downdraft. He noted there was a road nearby but there were cars on it that prevented him from landing on it. He added that the event happened within seconds.

He was asked the following questions

What time did he depart 2M2?

Between 1130 and 1140. He was flying to BGF for fuel, but the runway was being re-surfaced and he elected to divert to the nearest airport (UOS).

Were any flaps extended for takeoff?

No. Flaps are not recommended for takeoff.

What was his rotation speed?

45 miles-per-hour (mph). He then levelled off and began to accelerate to 60 mph, but planned to climb at 50 mph.

What is V_x and V_y for the airplane?

V_x -50 mph

V_y - 60 mph

At the moment of the encounter what was his airspeed and altitude?

He estimated he was at 40 ft above ground level. He was pitching for 50 mph, and realized the flight was descending not climbing. He noted trees to the right was getting bigger not smaller. The engine was developing full power, and he pushed the nose forward to gain airspeed.

Was there AWOS or ASOS at UOS¹?

There was at BFG. The runway at UOS is 50 ft wide and surrounded by trees.

¹ According to AirNav.com (<https://www.airnav.com/airport/KUOS>) there is AWOS-3 listed at BFG located 8NM West.

As part of his preflight briefing for the flight from 2M2 to BGF did he see a Notice to Airman (NOTAM) for runway closure due to re-surfacing?
He did not see a NOTAM for runway closure. He did check the weather for his intended route.

How did he obtain the weather?
By his iPad. He has an app called Avare.

Was there anything mechanically wrong with the airplane that caused the accident?
No. The engine was “making good power”, adding, “there was nothing wrong with the airplane.
What type airplane is it?
It was a Zenith built from a kit. It was a STOL airplane, model CH750 STOL. IT can takeoff and land within 150 to 200 ft.

What seat was he in and restraint was he using?
He was in the left seat and wearing the 3-point restraint.

How many hours on the airframe since he built it?
He accessed the logbook during the call and noted the last logged condition inspection was dated August 3, 2019. The airframe total time at that time was 45.6 hours. He has flown it since then and estimated the total time is about 50 hours. The last condition inspection he did was on October 8, 2020, while at 2M2. He did not have a sticker with him at that time so that is why the latest condition inspection was not recorded in the maintenance records.

Where is the airplane presently?
In a hangar at UOS. There were not gentle with the recovery. He thinks the damage to the right wing main spar attached occurred at impact and not a result of recovery.

The call ended at 0906 EDT.

The digest was e-mailed to him for review on October 20, 2020. He corrected the date of the accident when speaking with the Investigator in Charge but suggested no other corrections to the digest.