



MEMORANDUM

Daniel P. Boggs
Air Safety Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board
Office of Aviation Safety - Eastern Region

Subject: Email Correspondence Between Pilot (Michael Kuhnert) and FAA Inspector (Randy Clarke) on January 3, 2021

Below is the content of the email sent by Mr. Kuhnert to Inspector Clarke:

Dear Mr. Clarke,
here is my statement on the events of December 30, 2020.
Date: 12/30/2020
Time: around 12.00 PM
Location of groundloop: W75
Type Aircraft: Taylor Craft 12BC
Number on board: 2
Pilot Name: Michael Kuhnert
Licence# -----
Ratings: Commercial, Instrument ASEL, ASES
CFI,CFII ASE
Tailwheel Endorsement
FAST Formation Card
Flight Experience:
TT: 8450, + 1520 as Ultralight Instructor
Tailwheel:
3450, of which 2550 Fairchild PT-19 (commercial ride operation),
T-6 Texan (rides at events for Forgotten Heroes Foundation}
Instructor and Check Pilot for the Commemorative Air Force for the following types:
Ryan
PT-22, Fairchild PT-19, Fairchild F-24 and Stinson L-5
Flying Fokker DR I and Nieuport 17 full size replicas for the Forgotten Heroes
Foundation,
remaining tailwheel time Aeronca Champ, Piper Pacer, Cub, Taylor Craft, Luscombe 8,
and
various Experimentals

I founded Bay Aviation, a flight school and air tour operation in 2007. We are flying rides in the PT-19 since 2009, locally and at all major airshow events in the Mid Atlantic region. We are also giving checkouts and tailwheel endorsements in the plane and are performing classic aircraft deliveries.

Last Medical: 10/29/2020

Last BFR: 6/10/2020, It also was my annual proficiency check for my CAF Check Pilot currency.

Passenger's name: Thomas Hendrickson, pilot rated,
Commercial, Instrument ASEL

Weather Information: On my PC before flight, WeatherTap.com, Metars and TAFs from ORF, PHF, NHK and the AWOS at FYJ, as the one at W75 is still NOTAM'ed out. Also checked for TFR's.

Weather conditions: Sunny, light winds.

We took off from Runway 01, with the intention to land on the grass strip running parallel with Rwy 01. When touching down there was a pull to the right, which I was able to compensate for with a lot of left rudder. A little further on this radically changed, as the aircraft now tried to break out to the left. Once this very abruptly had started, even full opposite right rudder could not keep the aircraft from continuing the movement to the left. When crossing the tarmac runway, she nosed over, scraping along on the prop spinner, until reaching soft ground to the left of the paved area. The nose dug in and the aircraft turned upside down. Neither one of us got hurt, we switched the fuel selector into the off position and exited the airplane. Since fuel was running out of the tank's filler neck, we decided with the help of several friends to right the machine up. This was easily achieved, but the fuel selector failed to stop the fuel from leaking out, no matter its position. We then put a bucket underneath the engine cowling to catch the fuel I got a text from friends in the afternoon, asking me to come out and look at the airplane's tracks. I have attached pictures of that and only understood then, what really must have happened. Locked into my mind had been the uncontrollable departure to the left. Now I saw that it was in fact the right brake which locked up during touchdown. I remembered that initial pull to the right, which I was able to control with left rudder. Further along though, the tracks show a rolling right wheel; the locked brake finally must have let go. Shortly after the sharp left turn started, by the time I had reversed the left rudder fully to the right, the swing to the left had become unstoppable. Since the uncontrollable movement was to the left, I made in my initial statement to the police the assumption that my left brake had locked. The tracks told the truth. After your checks on the brake mechanism during your investigation on December 31, my mechanic Paul Grant also did some more checking today, with me operating them from inside. We took several pictures and with the available max data per email likely to be exceeded by adding them, I will send a short second email with these findings and pictures. Picture 3247, airplane landed toward camera, initial right track from locked right brake. Picture 3249 Taken further along the roll out, right brake still locked, left brake might start lock up, or not, but ground track is still straight. Picture 3252 Right brake not locked up anymore, rapid break out to the left All pictures taken with aircraft coming toward the camera.

Since the heel brake levers are mounted really close together and toward the pilot, in relationship to the rudder pedals, it would be impossible to accidentally stand on the brakes during landing and still be able to have control of the rudder pedals.

I took a picture of the set-up and it will be included in the next email, concerning the brakes.

I hope this covered all aspects of the ground loop and surrounding circumstances.

All the Best

Michael Kuhnert

Dan Boggs
Air Safety Investigator
NTSB