

At approximately 0703 on April 13th, I was leaving work and heard a call on our radio stating 'we may have a plane crash'. I went back toward the Public Safety building and responded Airport Crash Unit 226. No aircraft was observed in distress at this time. Information led us to believe that the aircraft went down off airport property to the East. AU 2204 (Gary Craun) and 2217 (David Werner) opened a gate to provide egress to Little Run Road which appeared to be the best access point. As I approached the aircraft I attempted to position AU 226 to provide turret coverage for rescue operations. I exited the vehicle and donned my PPE. As I approached the aircraft, one person was out of the aircraft on the uphill right wing. Another person was observed still inside the aircraft in the right seat attempting to exit. I asked for some extrication equipment and made my way to the patient's vicinity. As I was preparing to make an egress point larger, I noticed a strong odor of AvGas. I did a quick survey and found several streams of AvGas 100LL leaking from the right fuel tank. The fuel was streaming down the underside of the wing and was dripping off right under the right front wing root. At this time, I decided to do a rapid extrication as the fuel was leaking toward the engine compartment. The patient was unable to move his feet from inside the aircraft to the outside on his own. I lifted both of his feet out and turned around and requested that the patient wrap his arms around my neck as we were leaving the aircraft vicinity. We made our way uphill through the brush toward Chris Weaver (AU 2207). AU 2207 held the patient upright until I was able to retrieve a Leatherman to cut the fence blocking our path of egress. I made three cuts to the fence and determined it was now low enough to get our patient over the fence. AU 2207 then supported/dragged the patient uphill and we started a very rapid patient assessment. I elevated the patient's legs to treat for shock as his extremities were extremely cold and he kept saying he could not feel his legs. After patient care was turned over to Grottoes Rescue Squad, I returned to further assess and secure the aircraft. I requested that a BC Fire Extinguisher be positioned for safety closer to my proximity. I turned the keys to the off position and removed them. I checked master switches and took a picture to document their position. Stay Dri or absorbent material was placed under the fuel leaks and it was determined that attempting to plug the leaks would have most likely worsened the leakage. I retrieved a Pilot Log Book and a kneeboard and gave them to other units. I then returned to the aircraft and searched for the battery location. I observed the 'Piper Plug' on the right rear of the empennage and traced the power cable toward the right rear seat. I lifted the right rear seat and disconnected the battery. I requested that other personnel tune into the ELT frequency to see if the ELT was activated. They replied that no ELT was heard. I checked the ELT and it was in the ARMED position. I switched the ELT to the OFF position and noted that it appeared the antennae was disconnected from the ELT unit. I am unsure if this occurred as a result of the impact or not. I then returned to reassess the fuel leakage to determine if further action was needed. At this time the leak appeared to have ceased. The scene was determined at this point to be secure and I went into service.

Stacey Smith 2203

At 1907hrs on April 12th 2021. I heard 7575G with radio traffic on Unicom, that a plane had crashed off the east side of the runway. I made a radio call on our operations frequency with the hopes that the departing shift hadn't gone too far and could return. Stacy Smith AU 2203 responded in AU 226, myself responded in AU 224. AU 2204 Gary Craun & AU 2217 David Werner responded in an operations vehicle. I made a radio call to Augusta ECC to advise them of the crash. To access the crash, we had to go out to an Eastgate at the electrical vault. AU 226 arrived on location first followed by AU 224. The crash was located approximately half a mile down little Run Road, just off the east side of the highway. As we arrived on location, AU 226 took the road. I noticed that just a wingtip was sticking out of the tree line. I decided to take AU 224 to the other side of the tree line to get better access to the aircraft. I turned into a driveway and proceeded into a field above the crash site. Upon my arrival, I observed a white Cherokee style aircraft with heavy damage. There was gentleman standing on the wing of the aircraft. The aircraft was located in thick brush and trees up against an old fence. I could smell a strong odor of Avgas. I approach the scene on foot. I asked the gentleman that was standing on the wing of the aircraft if he was injured. He said he didn't think so. I observed second gentleman sitting in the left seat of the aircraft attempting to get out. He was covered in small amounts of blood. I could see cuts and abrasions on his legs and arms and face. I asked the gentleman that was sitting in the aircraft if he could remain seated and still, that we would make access to him. The brush around the aircraft was too thick to access immediately. As I made my way to the aircraft from the upper side through the thick brush. AU 2203 is making access from the bottom. As we both made access to the aircraft. I asked AU 2203 who had RIT. He advised me that AU 2217 David Werner was acting as RIT. We proceeded to help the ambulatory gentleman through the brush and over the fence. I asked him to go stand next to AU 224 which is above the crash site out of Harm's Way. I re-enter the thick brush and made my way back to the crash site. AU 2203 was assisting the second gentleman out of the aircraft. He assisted him to the fence line where I was located. I then took over trying to get the gentleman away from the crash site. AU 2203 took his Leatherman Multi-Tool and had to cut the barbed-wire fencing. Once the fencing was cut, I was able to lift the gentleman through the fence and was able to place him on the ground away from the crash. I begin my assessment of the patient. AU 2203 made his way to my location he took over assessing the second patient. I went to the first patient and started patient assessment on him. The only injuries I was able to find was a large 1-inch laceration under his chin, a small abrasion on the lower left quadrant of the back. He wasn't complaining of any other injuries. Grottoes fire department and rescue squad arrived on location shortly after. They took over care of both patients and preparing them for transport to RMH. I then turn my focus to assisting AU 2203 with stopping fuel from leaking from the aircraft. We were able to mitigate the fuel leakage to a minimum. The scene was then turned over to State Police. I returned to the airport in AU 224 and it was placed in service.

Chris Weaver 2207

Jacob Shifflett CFI Blue Ridge Aviation

[REDACTED]

While taxiing to Runway 23 I observed a Piper Cherokee on final to Runway 23. The aircraft was flaring for landing & the left wing dropped. The aircraft began turning left just a few feet off the runway. The aircraft never climbed up but descended down over the embankment on the east side of the runway. I never saw the aircraft climb out so I notified the FBO on the CTAF of the crash.

Ellis Kent Shanholtz

Romney, WV 26757

My statement of the event April 12, 2021

To Whom, it may concern:

I'm an instrument rated pilot who's aspiring to get my commercial rating. I've taken my written commercial test and am now building the hours I need to take the practical test. I planned on flying down to KSHD doing a touch and go, then return back to KFRR area to do maneuvers till dark, and then land at KFRR. Before departing I did my normal preflight using all, my checklist as well as filling both tanks full of fuel. I then departed KFRR VFR, the visibility was unrestricted and ceiling was broken around 6,000 feet. I flew down the valley to KSHD, at the end of the mountain range I made the first radio call to KSHD traffic. There was one plane 5 miles out landing KSHD. I entered the pattern on a left downwind for runway 23 a little high at 2,100 MSL. Winds were 320/08. At the end of the runway I went threw my landing check list which consist of using the fullest tank, mixture rich, and fuel pump on. I then decreased the power back to 2,000 RPM and then the first notch of flaps. At 1,800 MSL I turned base. Only losing 200 feet on base I pulled in the second notch of flaps. Upon turning final I opted to land with only two notches of flaps because of the 8 knot crosswind. Around 100 feet above the runway my airspeed was fast around 90 MPH with the power all the way back at this point. Since I was fast and felt like it was unstable approach, I decided to go around. I smoothly applied full power but I did not gain any altitude, the plane started banking hard to the left. By this time I am around 50 feet AGL and left of the runway and I am applying right aileron and right rudder attempting to level the wings. The next thing I remember a first responder is saying he smells gas, at that point I pull myself together and cut the mixture off. Before I can turn the fuel selector to off and turn the mags and battery off, a first responder is yelling at me to get out and one first responder is approaching with the jaws of life. That's when I see my friend Aidan was out of the plane. At this point there is blood in my eyes, my vision is blurry and I can feel deep wounds in both my legs and I am unable to walk. A first responder then proceeds to help me out and put me on his back. He carried me out of the wood line to a field. I was transported to Rockingham Memorial Hospital and treated for my wounds, then transported to UVA hospital to receive further treatment. I feel very blessed that I only suffered lacerations across my hips and neck, as well as I have a splint on my left foot, along with a brace on my right foot. I go back to UVA on April 26, 2021 for a follow up visit.

Ellis Shanholtz

April 16, 2021



MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

Todd Gunther
Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region

Date: May 7, 2021
Subject: Information Provided by Ellis Shanholtz (Pilot)
NTSB Case Number: ERA21LA183

According to Mr. Shanholtz, He had pondered and questioned himself about the accident. He advised that he could not remember a lot of the details.

He was working on his commercial certificate and was going to take his flight instructor flight test once he finished his commercial flight test in about a week, so he would operate the airplane from the right seat when flying, to practice his maneuvers from that side.

When he got to the airport before the accident flight, he got a weather briefing, looked at the fuel in the airplane which was only half full, and topped it off. He then performed a preflight inspection of the airplane, took off, and flew to Shenandoah.

Upon arrival in the area of the airport, he made a radio call announcing his intentions and another pilot advised that she was landing on runway 23, so he entered the traffic pattern "on a 45 degree."

The wind was about 320 degrees 8 knots when he was approaching runway 23 and as he got lower on final, "something just did not feel right," so when he was about 50 feet he went around. The left wing then "dipped," and he added more right rudder. He kept stepping on it, but "it would not do anything."

He next remembered a firefighter saying, "get up...get out" and he could smell avgas. He then "cut off the mixture." He next remembered being asked, "can you walk," and remembered them laying him down, and that "there were lots of people there." He was then transported to Rockingham Memorial Hospital. He stayed 2-days and then they released him.

He also remembered that about halfway down to Shenandoah, when he was at 4,500 feet, he saw a rainbow and made a partial "circle" around it as he thought his friend Aiden, might enjoy it.

Aiden did not fly the airplane at all when they were on the flight but did want to be a pilot. His hands were not on the controls during the approach to landing.

Additionally, he remembered that he used 2-notches of wing flaps (about 25-degrees) on final approach and that there was no big noise from the engine and “it was not like it blew up or anything like that”.

He further remembered thinking that the engine had run extremally well during the takeoff and flight to Shenandoah, the flight was smooth, there was no turbulence, and that it was a beautiful evening,



MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

Todd Gunther
Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region

Date: June 5, 2021
Subject: Information Provided by Aiden Biddle (Passenger)
NTSB Case Number: ERA21LA183

According to Mr. Biddle, He and Mr. Shanholtz were going to “go flying and stuff,” and took off from Front Royal on the evening of the accident.

Mr. Shanholtz had told him not to touch the controls and when they went flying it was partly cloudy, but they could see well, and actually saw a few rainbows, and did some turns to see them better.

“Going down on the landing,” Mr. Biddle did not hear the engine go out at all and he never heard Mr. Shanholtz say that it did or anything. When the airplane was over the runway, the airplane just began to turn left, and hit the trees.

He had both the seatbelt and shoulder harness on, did not remember hitting the fence, and could not remember if the wing flaps “were out.”