

N5166S Witness statement for September 6th, 2021

Zackary Trego, Pilot License #-[REDACTED]

We had landed about 10 minutes before the accident in question at 15:04 local time at Wings Field (KLOM). While we were offloading passengers, we heard the F-16's overhead intercepting the aircraft in question, (N5166S) and they were circling over top of the airport. The aircraft (N5166S) entered the pattern on a wide downwind leg and flew a relatively wide base to final turn. While on his final approach I noticed the wings on the aircraft rocking (winds were 290 @9G18 at the time), and I had mentioned to the pilot I was with that the aircraft looked unstable and slow, and that I thought it was going to crash. The aircraft continued its approach to the runway in the same slow and rocking motion, and the aircraft appeared to be flying in an uncoordinated manner until he was over top of runway 24 at approximately 50 ft AGL at which point the right wing of the aircraft dropped sharply and the aircraft appeared to stall and fall onto the runway in a right wing low and nose down attitude. When the aircraft impacted the runway, it travelled a small distance forward (maybe 50 ft) before coming to rest on the runway 24 right of centerline with the nose pointing about 45 degrees off center. The aircraft came to rest with the RH main gear pushed through the top of the wing and the wing was resting on the ground, the nose gear had been sheared off on impact and the plane was resting on the underside of the cowlings with the prop blades bent backwards.

After witnessing the crash, myself, and the pilot I was flying with rushed down to the accident scene to make sure that everyone was ok and to assist in any manner that we could. Once we had turned off the fuel selector and the ELT, we again verified that the occupants were ok. I called the airport FBO and advised them about the accident. When speaking to the pilot and passenger, after verifying they were ok, I had asked them if they were aware they had violated the Presidential TFR that originates in Wilmington Delaware. The pilot appeared to be oblivious the fact that there was a TFR and that he had been intercepted and that he had been followed by F-16's for a number of minutes while he was transiting the TFR. The pilot and passenger seemed shaken up after the accident but appeared to be of sound mind and coherent of what was going on. The passenger made note that he had seen the fighter jets and was taking photos of them as he thought it was cool/strange that they were being circled by them. The passenger, to my understanding, is not a pilot, and did not have any flight experience and he was just a neighbor to the PIC of the Cherokee.