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Title: Sr. ASI
Division: ERA

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Subject: ERA24LA255
Contact: Russ Standifur, FAA Inspector

The following is a excerpt of Inspector Standifur's written statement in support of this investigation:

"On June 08, 2024, N512JA performed a landing at Monroe County Airport to which the pilot/aircraft owner described the aircraft began to violently shimmy during landing roll out. He attempted to bring the aircraft under control by applying right rudder and right brake because the aircraft slowly started veering to the left.

Soon after applying these actions the right wing collapsed to the pavement which spun the aircraft to the left and came to a rest in the grass off the side of the runway.

Witnesses and first responders came to his aid and helped him out of the aircraft to which they transported him to the hospital for further evaluation on his injuries.

On June 10, 2024 Inspector Standifur arrived at the airport to investigate what happened and gather data for the NTSB. The pilot also arrived soon afterward to which Inspector Standifur conducted an interview with him to discuss the details of what happened that day. Inspector Standifur then instructed him to write out a statement of his own on a word document of what he described in the interview and submit it as soon as practical for the investigation of this accident.

Inspection of the aircraft revealed the right wing had buckled skin in two areas on top of the wing. All four prop blades broke off at the hub and both landing gear assemblies broke off at a welded attach point at the bottom of the oleo strut.

Further visual inspection of the welded areas of the landing gear assemblies and the attach points on the oleo strut revealed little to no penetration of the weld into either component where they detached during the accident.

The rest of the fuselage suffered little to no damage, however inspection of the tail wheel assembly inside the tail wheel bay revealed the right attachment bracket was broken off from the fuselage.

Inspector Standifur proceeded to perform some research at the office by reviewing the SPAS database on this aircraft and discovered this aircraft had sustained substantial damage during an accident on 12/11/2012. This record revealed little information on what kind of damage the aircraft sustained because it was expunged.

Inspector Standifur then focused his attention on the main landing gear anomalies regarding the welds. An inquiry was made to the aircraft manufacture to discuss any possible issues related to the main landing gear of this aircraft.

Discussions with the president of the company revealed he was involved with this aircraft during the first accident because they supplied and engine to the aircraft builder of this aircraft and it had failed in flight and caused the aircraft to land in a field and flipped over on its top when it came to a rest.

Inspector Standifur informed him that this same aircraft sustained substantial damage during this accident and the LT and RT main landing gear assemblies were found detached at a welding point on the bottom of each oleo strut.

He responded by saying that sounds highly unusual because I was made aware of a prior aircraft accident to which the landing gear sustained substantial damage but the gear attach points that you are describing did not fail and in fact the tubing bent without the welds separating. He described that he would vouch any day of the week that the personnel I have in my welding shop are top notch and are highly skilled on welding these components into one assembly.

He then commented that he believed the landing gear of this aircraft had sustained damage during the first accident but did not know what the aircraft owner did to them to continue using them after he rebuilt the aircraft.

Inspector Standifur then performed a review of the aircraft logbook entries that were copied during the day of the aircraft inspection and a logbook entry was found describing that the Lt and Rt lower main gear were repaired and installed on this aircraft on 03/09/2014.

Inspector Standifur then sent an email asking the pilot/aircraft owner what he would call the main landing gear assemblies that were found detached from the oleo struts, he responded by describing them as "Main Gear Weldments".

Inspector Standifur then had a phone conversation with the pilot/aircraft owner discussing the pictures and his statement for describing the accident, during this conversation he proceeded to describe how the first accident happened to this aircraft and admitted the landing gear had been damaged during this accident and he found a welder that repaired the gear by grinding down the attach points of the landing gear assembly and a sleeve that it attaches too on the bottom of the oleo strut and got him to reweld the two pieces back together.

Inspector Standifur asked him was this the same area to which they came off on this accident and he responded, "Yes". He then continued to describe that these two components (landing gear tube assembly and the sleeve) come in two pieces when the aircraft builder receives the kit from the manufacture and that the aircraft builder has to either weld them himself or get a third-party welder to perform the welding of these components.

The pilot/aircraft owner then started to discuss what he believed was the cause of this accident and he believed the tail wheel bracket broke during landing to which it began the violent shimmy motion during landing to which the aircraft began to ground loop to the left and caused an excessive side load on both main gear assemblies that made them fail in the way they did.

He told Inspector Standifur that he will be putting this in his statement of the account of the accident because he wants everyone to understand how this accident happened.

The following week Inspector Standifur gathered the main landing gear components including the tail wheel assembly for the NTSB so that they can inspect the welds of the main landing gear and the tail wheel assembly.

Inspector Standifur sent the components to the NTSB Lab as directed via UPS.

Inspector Standifur had a follow-up phone conversation with the aircraft manufacture in regard to how the main landing gear were manufactured and

assembled, they described that the landing gear assemblies in regards to manufacture and welding are completed as a one piece assembly and are installed in the mid-section wing before sending the kit out to the customer. The aircraft manufacture submitted an email and pictures to validate how this is done in house.

Inspector Standifur has come to the conclusion based on visual inspection and limited knowledge of welding and with the aircraft manufacture's input, that the main landing gear suffered significant damage from the first accident of this aircraft and the aircraft owner had them repaired and placed back on the aircraft."