

N241MU

08/24/2025- I was outside with my girlfriend on a walk when I received a phone call via telegram from Drew Haberlein, the dispatcher on shift at the time, he informed me that an aircraft had gone off the runway and into the grass and asked if I would be able to come to the airport. I told him I could be there in about fifteen to twenty minutes. The timestamp on the phone call was 7:43PM.

I arrived at the flight school at approximately 8:00PM and was met by Bill Noe, Nathaniel Ramsey, Brendan Laughton, and Drew Haberlein at the dispatch desk. I asked the group if the aircraft was on its way back to the ramp and was informed by the group that the first responders and airport personnel were still working on a plan to get it out of the grass. Nancy Ritter arrived and told Brendan and I to get a ride to go out to the scene to retrieve the pilots and oversee the recovery of the aircraft.

Brendan and I walked to the Capital Jet Center and got inside their van, and we were escorted out to the scene where the airport police, fire services, airport personnel, and wrecker service were already present. The airport police had the CFI and student pilot separated to give written statements. I approached Ethan, asked if he was OK and he nodded yes. I told him Brendan is over by the police cruiser and that we had a vehicle to return them to the Flight School.

I observed that the aircraft had damage to the left wing, and the left main tire was flat. The aircraft had turned nearly opposite of their direction on landing, and I observed that the aircraft struck a runway sign. The sign was bent at approximately a 45-degree angle and was still attached. Airport personnel were already attempting to remove and replace the sign.

One airport employee told me "The brakes are locked up." There was concern that it would be difficult to move the aircraft if the brakes were locked or engaged. So, I reached inside the cabin to press the brake pedals with my hands to see if the pedals felt stiff or loose, and they felt normal. There was no visual evidence of the brakes being locked up that I could find. I confirmed no brake fluid, fuel, or any liquids were leaking from the aircraft.

The wrecker service employee asked me if they could put N241MU on the back of their truck. I expressed my concern with the tail striking the ground on its way up onto the steep incline of the wrecker truck and advised that we should use the tug and a dolly to get the aircraft back to the ramp. The airport police and airport personnel expressed their displeasure with how long it would take to get the tug out to the scene and seemed like they were in a rush to remove the aircraft. They told me it would take 20 to 30 minutes to get the tug out to the scene.

Since the aircraft was in the grass, there was a concern of the tug getting stuck in the grass as well, so the wrecker service used their winch and a soft strap to get the aircraft out of the grass. I advised them to place the strap around the lowest point of the nose strut so it would be as similar as possible to tugging the aircraft normally from the nose wheel. As the winch engaged and started to pull the aircraft, the left main wheel pant was dragging in the grass causing damage to the wheel pant. There was no obvious way to prevent the wheel pant from dragging with the equipment that was available, so we continued to winch the aircraft out of the grass. Dragging the left wheel pant caused significant tears to it.

Once the aircraft was on the concrete of taxiway alpha we removed the winch strap. The Capital Jet Center tug arrived with a tow bar and dolly. We got several of the airport personnel to lift from the bottom of the left wing to get the dolly underneath the flat tire. With the dolly attached to the left main, the CJC personnel attached the tow bar to the nose wheel and tugged the aircraft back to the Marshall ramp. I rode on the tug as a look-out for the tug driver in case anything were to go wrong with the dolly, a fire truck followed behind with spotlights on the right main wheel and the dolly.

We got the aircraft in front of the Marshall Hangar and disconnected the tug but left the dolly under the flat tire. I used our hand operated electric tug to pull the aircraft into the hangar. Once the aircraft was parked in the hangar, Russell Pitman (Rusty) and the CJC employee removed the dolly from under the flat tire.

Bill Noe arrived in the hangar and asked me what my next steps were going to be. I told him I was going to await further instruction from my supervisor, Nancy Ritter, and not attempt to touch the aircraft until advised. Bill then told me I had the OK from him, and that he overruled Nancy, to work on the aircraft and he insisted that I investigate the cause to find out if it could be a fleet-wide issue. Bill then left the hangar, and it was Rusty and I in the hangar at the time. An airport police officer arrived to take photos of the aircraft as well. I do not recall if he was taking pictures before or after I began disassembling the LH wheel pant.

(9:15PM) Rusty and I jacked the aircraft up. I removed the left wheel pant, took pictures of the brake assembly and tire. I observed that the cotter key and safety wire were present, no abnormalities to the brakes were found. The tire was completely off its seat, or "off the bead". Both tires spin freely with no brakes applied. With the brake pedals applied the tires would not spin, indicating the brakes were operative. Both brake pedals worked independently as they should. I observed movement of the rudder with the rudder pedals and found no abnormalities.

While inspecting the left main tire I found two gashes in the tire along with one flat spot resulting in cords showing. I disassembled the tire and wheel assembly to look inside the

tire for any obvious thorough and through damage. The results were in-conclusive to the naked eye. I attempted to re-inflate the tire on the same wheel assembly I removed it from to check for leaks, but the tire was too deformed to get it to inflate. At this point I stopped working on N241MU and left the aircraft on jacks with the tire removed and disassembled. The approximate time of work stoppage on N241MU was 10:30PM.

I then went back over to the flight school building to meet with Nancy, Brendan, Rusty, and Drew. Nancy was on the phone with someone from the FAA, I did not catch the name. We all sat on the couches as Nancy finished up her phone call. The time was approximately 10:45PM. At this time Nathaniel returned with the pilots after taking them to the ER.

Nancy gave us all a briefing not to discuss anything with the media and to only answer our phones to people that we know, and then dismissed us all to go home.

8/25/2025 – I arrived at work at 6:15am and confirmed that the aircraft was still in the same state that I had left it in the night before. I did not work the aircraft and remained in my office waiting for the FAA inspectors to arrive.

After my time with the FAA inspectors, the school had a mandatory safety stand down meeting to brief all students and employees of the event of N241MU. After the safety standdown meeting, we had a team meeting to discuss risk assessment.

After our risk assessment meeting I met again with the FAA inspectors in the hangar, who had asked me who ordered me to work on the aircraft, and informing me I should have left it quarantined.

After the FAA inspectors left again, Kevan Williams (A&P technician) was able to get the tire to inflate on the same wheel assembly and we were able to identify three points of air escaping on the tire. Two points of leakage were from cuts, and the other from the flat spot showing cords.

Signature

 *Rex Reynolds*

Date and time: 8/25/2025 12:52PM