

Date: 1/28/2017

To: Gary Rucker FAA, Adam Gerhardt NTSB
From: Jeff Patten
Subject: N6865F (Piper)

My wife (Sandi) and I [REDACTED] on the South end of the runway at Sun Valley Airport (A20). We have a good view of the South runup area, approach, final and touch down, departure area for Runway 36. On Thursday, 1/26/2017, around noon time (give or take an hour either way) I heard a plane doing a run up and taxiing for take off to the north from our airport runway 36. It sounded more powerful than the typical planes at this field so I asked my wife (who had already went outside to watch the takeoff) who it was? She stated she did not know but got the N number and said it was a nice plane. It soon departed and the sound diminished.

My wife continued to monitor the plane's progress turning East and then South when she noticed the plane about directly east of our house preparing to turn Right base at a lower than standard pattern altitude (no more than 5 mins had passed from take-off). She hollered out "He's coming back". At this point she was out front of the house again and I went to and was looking out the front window with a good view of short final and the first 1/3 to 1/2 of the runway.

When the plane came into my sight on short final, I immediately saw the landing gear was still retracted. I watched knowing this was going to be a gear up landing. I have witnessed many of these as I am a 30 year retired Firefighter (with over 20 of these years assigned to the Crash Crew at John Wayne Airport in Orange County California). As the pilot rounded out his flair for landing, the plane was about 5 feet off the ground with the right wing slightly higher than the left wing and the gear suddenly deployed (all three gear started down). The closure rate with the ground was just too much and only the right gear had time to fully deploy and lock. The plane's left wing and nose contacted the runway and collapsed the other two gear then the plane veered off the runway to the west (left) and came to a dusty stop. The plane was never out of my view from short final to full stop.

My wife and I both got in her car and drove to the crash site picking up another person on the way making his way there. While en-route, I could see an older male had got out of the right side of the plane and had come around to the left rear door. On arrival I (we) contacted the male (the pilot). He was talking with his extremely upset wife in the back seat and was holding his 2 large size dogs on leashes (they had also been in the plane).

He was trying to explain to us what had happened and stated he had "Had a full electrical failure" right after take off and had tried to figure it out and chose to return for a landing. I told him he made a gear up landing and he stated his reasons of why it

happened based on no electrical power. He said the gear finally deployed when he went full flaps on landing. I looked at the panel and saw the the landing gear lever was in the down position. I asked him to double check that the Mags, Master switch and fuel valves were shut off and he did that. I spent a few minutes with His wife in the back seat of the airplane calming her down. I ran the pilot over to his pickup in our car (2000 feet or less away) and we both returned to the crash site. When back, I then helped his wife get out of the airplane. I then went to the right pilot door and I noticed the manual flap lever was flat on the floor (in the Flaps up position) but the right flap was in the down position. The plane had been on the ground about 15 mins at this time. The left side flap was in the up position (this was the side that contacted the ground).

About that time the pilot was getting a phone call from an FAA facility telling him his ELT was going off. I opened the rear bulkhead panel and located the ELT, removed it and shut it off. After that I spoke with the airport operator, Jim Lambert, who was on-scene and was on his cell phone. I confirmed with him that he was going to contact the FAA and report the incident. He said yes. My wife and I helped the pilot unload his personal items (travel bags) from the plane and load them into his pickup truck. My wife and I then returned to our home.

If you have any more questions or concerns you can contact me or my wife at: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]