

Statement of pilot, Allen W. Inks

Re: N608US accident on Monday, July 30, 2018
NTSB Accident # GAA18CA458

I had spent the previous night at the home of Jorge Blohm, who lives at the airport GA18. My aircraft, (an experimental amateur built motorglider) N608US, was located at a nearby airport (KTOC) where I had landed the night before. I had not flown into GA18 before, and Mr. Blohm and I walked along the runway, while we discussed such pertinent information as the length of the runway, the slope of the runway and the surrounding high ground, the length of the grass vs. the wheel pants on my motorglider, touch down points, and the approach path to use. Then we went to KTOC to bring my aircraft to GA18. I did a pre-flight, and observed over 2 hours of fuel in the aircraft (9.5 gallons of fuel were drained from the wing tanks following the accident, enough for 2 – 3 hours of flying, depending on cruise speed, far more than were needed for the sub-half hour flight we were anticipating). The winds were calm when we left GA18, and when we later left KTOC.

I was pilot in command. We flew VFR directly to GA18 from KTOC. We first overflew the runway at GA18 as is local procedure to announce our arrival, then flew the pattern a first time while Mr. Blohm pointed out landmarks and explained the approach. We made a low approach, but did not attempt to land, but rather went around so that Mr. Blohm could further brief me on the approach and missed approach procedure. Then we came back and did the approach again. I felt comfortable that I had all the information necessary to make a normal landing at this airport.

On short final, I was in a good position, controlling my speed with pitch (engine was at idle), and descent by modulating the air brakes (operating handle is in an overhead location), as is normally done with this aircraft. I had full flaps (flaperons). We were at a normal approach speed, altitude, and descent rate (about 500 feet per minute) – though my attention was principally outside the aircraft. After previously briefly deploying the air brakes to adjust height downward a few feet, I had fully closed them in preparation to begin my flare when we got closer to my aim point, expecting the descent rate to decrease as is normal. We had passed over the trees at the end of the runway, and were about 10 to 20 feet up (rough estimate) when I noted that the aircraft was descending at a much higher rate than normal. I moved my hand from the spoiler to the throttle to arrest the descent, but before I could accelerate, we impacted the runway. There was no stall, and no indication of a malfunction of the aircraft.

Post-accident, we measured our tire tracks starting about 533 feet from where aircraft ultimately came to rest ("rest point"), and ending at about 500 feet from the rest point (and 4 prop strike marks centered about 510 feet from rest point). The only debris noted at that location was the rear part of the nose wheel wheelpant.

The aircraft rebounded banked to the left. I added full power, but before I could level out, and turn back toward the runway, the left wingtip impacted a hedge of bushes about 5 feet up, and about 168 feet from rest point. The aircraft rotated around counter clockwise in flight.

The aircraft impacted the ground for the second time 60 feet from rest point, probably travelling generally backward causing the nose wheel strut to collapse forward. The nose wheel fork broke in two places, freeing the nose wheel from the strut. The nose wheel and embedded portion of the prop were

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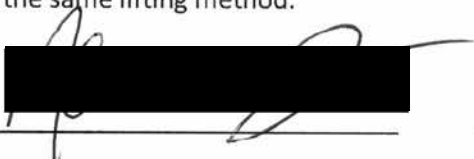
found at this location. Prop debris was scattered generally perpendicular to the runway around this location, though some bits were found along the trail to the resting point, further supporting my belief that the aircraft had spun about 180 degrees from original direction of flight by this point.

The aircraft came to rest against an embankment of fill dirt, pointing generally North-Northeast, with both wingtips off the ground. I immediately turned off the A and B Lane switches, the master and avionics switches, and turned the fuel selector valve to off. I checked that my passenger, Mr. Blohm, was okay, turned off the Dynon Skyview displays (operating on backup battery power) and we both exited the aircraft. I verified that there was no indication of leaking fuel, and checked the ELT for actuation (it had not actuated – but the crash, subjectively, did not seem very violent, so I was not surprised). The local time was approximately 1:15 pm.

Initially, I was unsure of whether the crash was reportable. I sent pictures of the aircraft, and the damage to Mr. Robert Mudd, A&P I.A., owner of Composite Aircraft Repair LLC in Moriarity, NM (tel: [REDACTED] who is also a dealer for Pipistrel (manufacturer of the kit from which I built my aircraft). On Tuesday, August 1, 2018, Mr. Mudd expressed his opinion that the damage done to the aircraft met the criteria of an accident, requiring reporting. I then called the NTSB Response Operations Center.

In the meanwhile (on Monday), we gathered debris, making measurements as noted above, and documented the scene and damage with photographs. In light of the forecast approaching rain, I made the decision to recover the aircraft and store it in Mr. Blohm's hangar. We removed the wings and horizontal stabilizer/elevator in normal manner for this glider, then used a front end loader to lift the aircraft fuselage and engine together as a unit (using normal lift points that were used during assembly of the aircraft and mounting of the engine) prevent further damage to the aircraft. Initially, the aircraft was on a trailer used to move the aircraft to Mr. Blohm's hangar, but after inspection by Mr. John Spears of the Atlanta FSDO on Wednesday, August 1, 2018, the aircraft has been repositioned on rolling dollies utilizing the same lifting method.

By:


Allen W. Inks
Private Pilot
Cert. No. [REDACTED]

8/3/2018
Date