



NTSB RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Investigator name: Lewis
Mode: Aviation Air Safety Investigator
Region: Western Pacific

Date: 5/28/2014
Person Contacted: Michael Robbins [REDACTED]
NTSB Accident Number: WPR14FA209

Narrative Michael Robbins is a personal friend of the accident pilot, was present at the lake, and witnessed the accident.

Mr. Robbins said he had been summoned to the lake to aid the pilot in making repairs to the accident airplane.

He said the pilot told him that after landing on the water he (the pilot) was taxiing to a beach where he and his wife had planned to camp. While taxiing to the beach he (pilot) lowered the landing gear, with the intent to taxi the airplane onto the beach out of the water. Approaching the beach the pilot told him the left main landing gear struck a submerged berm, bent aft, and broke part of the gear's supporting structure. The rubber boot that keep water from entering the hull, where the main landing gear goes through the hull, was also torn.

The pilot contacted Mr. Robbins and asked him to bring some materials to the lake so he (pilot) could make temporary repairs to the airplane.

Mr. Robbins reported that the pilot had disconnected the left main landing gear from the actuator mechanism, and used a rope to tie the gear to the wing lift strut in the up position. He had also wired the tailwheel in the up position. The rubber boot that was torn during the landing was repaired with tape.

According to Mr. Robbins the pilot's intent was to fly the airplane to a lake with a boat ramp closer to home, and retrieve the airplane with a trailer.

During the takeoff attempts Mr. Robbins was talking to the pilot via handheld VHF radio. During the first attempt, the pilot aborted the takeoff, and Mr. Robbins told him via radio, that the airplane looked too low in the water, and he should return to the camp. He said the airplane turned toward shore and started to taxi back, then without warning the airplane turned away/into the wind, and the airplane engine powered up. The airplane accelerated bouncing off the waves and chop. The airplane became airborne, but suddenly nosed into the water with a large splash. The high-wings of the airplane lay on top of the water with the fuselage submerged.



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Mr. Robbins standing onshore with the pilot's wife, unable to reach the airplane, watched as nearby boats retrieved the pilot and headed to the boat launch ramp.



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Date: 5/25/2014
Person Contacted: Robert Jacobson [REDACTED]
NTSB Accident Number: WPR14FA209

Narrative

Robert Jacobson was in his boat with his wife fishing on Banks Lake at the time of the accident. Mr. Jacobson said he was in his boat fishing when he saw the airplane attempting to takeoff. He said it was unusual to see an airplane at the lake so he decided to record the takeoff with his cell phone. He provided the IIC with a wave file of the recording, and the witness had provided the video to a local TV station.

He said he watched (from 300-400 yards away) as the airplane powered up, accelerated, and was bouncing along the top of the waves. He said the water was choppy and that there was a lot of boat wake. The airplane became airborne for a moment, and then nosed down striking the water with a huge splash. He said he was the third boat to arrive at the airplane. The high wings of the airplane were floating on the surface of the water, the fuselage was submerged, but the engine was still running. Two boats had already arrived before him, and swimmers were trying to extricate the pilot. The swimmers were having trouble releasing the pilot's seatbelt, and his wife jumped into the water with a filet knife to cut the belts.

The unconscious pilot was brought to the surface and placed in Mr. Jacobson's boat. 911 had been called and emergency units were responding to the boat launch ramp. CPR was started on the pilot, and he was taken to the boat launch.



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Date: 5/25/2014
Person Contacted: Terry Cooper [REDACTED]
NTSB Accident Number: WPR14FA209

Narrative: Terry Cooper was a boater on Banks Lake, and witnessed the accident airplane's attempted takeoff. He was not familiar with airplane operations, but thought the accident occurred on the airplane's second attempt to takeoff. When he first saw the airplane, he said it was headed to the south-southeast toward shore, but then turned to the north-northeast into the wind and powered up. He said the water was choppy and there was a lot of wave action created by boat traffic. He said the airplane accelerated bouncing off the waves, and then nosed into the water with a huge splash. At that point, the airplane was floating semi-submerged on the top of the water, and boats were approaching to aid the pilot.

Mr. Cooper had first seen the airplane earlier in the day parked on a beach near a campsite.