

Don Swanson statement on plane crash March 11, 2018

First knowledge

I was outside of our barn and stopped to observe a climbing, white high wing aircraft with fat tundra tires, about 150 feet above the 2/3 point of the runway 31 at our airstrip Daybreak Field. At first I thought it was a white Aviat Husky that I see often in the area. Near the north end of the field the plane started a low left turn to a low left down wind to the south. The plane leveled out at or just below the level of the trees growing at the crest of the western bench to the East Fork Lewis River. I would put it at 250 ft. The plane was going out of my sight and would either continue south and away or turn base and final for a landing. Either way I would not be able to see anymore so, I turned away and began my work at the barn and then heard series of about 3 loud bangs, or and extended banging, in a very short time, maybe 2-3 tenths of a second, then a loud full-power engine sound and then a loud bang coupled to the engine sound and a very abrupt stoppage of all sound.

I have heard one other plane crash and that was what told me that I had just heard another.

I ran to the house to retrieve my phone told my wife we needed to close the house and get to the airstrip because I believed a plane had crashed.

Timeline

By phone records I have the plane crashing at 12:56 pdt

Pam and I arrived on the crash site and observed Ted Weisgram on the phone at about 13:03 pdt, Ted has texted me that he called 911 at 13:03

We tried to budge the aircraft and free the pilot but could not and needed more help.

Pam went for the backhoe to help lift the plane and called relatives and neighbors for more help at 13:05.

Recovery and assessment

Ted and I had not been able to move the aircraft off the pilot. When relatives and neighbors arrived we were able to lift it enough to cut the shoulder belt off of the pilot's back and get an opening large enough to pull her out. The fire department assessed her and declared a trauma code.

Tuesday, March 13, 2018

While we waited for the coroner we tried to assess how the aircraft got to it's crashsite.

A normal straight-in approach would have been 250 feet east and lined up with the runway 31. The aircraft was facing about parallel with the opposite runway at about 130 degrees. Ted Weisgram and my wife and I looked for impact to trees and considered many scenarios. We then noticed fresh cottonwood bark and broken branch sections near the plane. The bark and branches were still moist with sap. The wreckage was between two small ash trees that had very minimal damage. There was two cottonwood trees about 100 feet northwest of the aircraft. The west side of the west cottonwood had a couple of visible broken branches near the top, but the breaks appeared to be from earlier in the year. We followed a trail of broken branch sections and bark chips and found many larger branches and broken plexiglass near the western cotton wood tree's base. I believe the plexiglass was from the landing light lense on the left wing.

This Supercub has vortex generators on the wings and empennage. If the pilot was trying for a hard left turn to align with runway 31 and was at minimal airspeed and very low, the aircraft could have stalled or the pilot could have just misjudged the distance from the trees. I believe the left wing hit the top of the cotton wood tree in a hard left bank and was nearly stopped causing the right wing to fall and as the aircraft went nearly knife edge right wing down. Almost all kinetic energy was lost but the aircraft finally dragged free and the pilot revved the engine to try to fly out. At this point the aircraft was facing 90 degrees to the runway, maybe 40 degrees east, right wing down and falling with no speed for any lift to the wings or ailerons. The small amount of kinetic energy carried it the ~100 feet to the crash site and as the pilot revved the engine and tried to pull out. The wings and ailerons did nothing to help but the empennage was still intact and with the slipstream of the revved engine, turned the aircraft to it's south facing crash location. The aircraft hit nearly knife edge vertical and falling, right wing down. The right wing shows a compression collapse about 45 degrees from the leading edge tip inboard and to the rear. I believe the engine and wing impacted nearly simultaneously along with the right gear which broke off and rotated around to face to the rear and almost inline behind the left gear.

Don Swanson

Interview with Ted Weisgram [REDACTED], phone conversation on 3/12/18

Mr. Weisgram (pilot of an Aviat A-1, registered as N1275B) meet Mary Rosenblum by coincidence at Flying M Airport (OR05) in Yamhill, OR. They had breakfast and decided to do some flying around. Both of them departed at approx. 10:30 am and flew around the local area (Mr. Weisgram landed at Newberg). They then proceeded north and landed at Woodland State Airport (W27) in Woodland, WA approx. between 11:30 am – 12:00 pm. On the way to their home airports, they decided to do some touch and goes at Daybreak Airport (WA46) in La Center, WA. Mary went first. By the time Ted, arrived he didn't see Mary. He circled around and saw the wreckage.

Per witness, Mary Rosenblum hangered aircraft at Dietz Airpark (OR40) in Canby, OR.