

Kristyn Blocher
Air Safety Investigator
AS-WPR

Date: 8/24/24

Subject: WPR24FA285, witness

Contact: Daniel Young, [REDACTED]

Mr. Young is an immediate neighbor of residential dock that the accident airplane was tied up to, prior to recovery. He and some of his children saw the airplane approaching the lake for landing and described it as a "normal approach." He noticed that the "wheels were down." When the airplane was approaching, nothing else seemed usual with the airplane or the engine. When the airplane touched down, it immediately flipped over and Mr. Young ran outside. He and some of his older children took their boat out to the airplane, where it was upside down in the lake. He donned a mask and dove into the water to look for the pilot. He could see that the pilot was in the airplane but could not open the door. A second boat arrived and Dan offered his mask to the people in that boat. Additional boats arrived. About 10 minutes after the accident, fire/EMS, including a diver arrived at the lakeside and Dan took his boat to pick them up and take them to the airplane. The diver broke windows in the airplane and extracted the pilot.

Kristyn Blocher
Air Safety Investigator
AS-WPR

Date: 8/25/24

Subject: WPR24FA285, witness

Contact: Marvin Holden; [REDACTED]

Mr. Holden lives on the southeast side of Lake Meridian and knew the accident pilot. He often observed the airplane coming or going from the lake and was familiar with the pilot's typical operations. The morning of the accident, he heard the airplane overhead from inside his house and went to his deck with his binoculars. He observed the airplane through his binoculars as it approached the lake and could see that the landing gear was extended. He did not have time to get his handheld radio out, to communicate with the pilot. When the airplane was on short approach, Mr. Holden could see that the approach profile looked normal; however, the gear was still extended. The airplane contacted the water and there was a big splash. He called 911. He got into a boat to go help and could see that the police boat was launching from its dock as well. When he got to the accident site, other boats were there as well. A boat went to shore to pick up emergency responders, and they worked to rescue the pilot.

Highlights that Mr. Holden recalled were that the airplane's approach profile looked normal, except for the extended landing gear, and that the last time he had seen the airplane landing on the lake was in July of 2024.



Kristyn Blocher
Air Safety Investigator
AS-WPR

Date: 8/25/24

Subject: WPR24FA285, witness

Contact: Matthew Richardson; [REDACTED]

Mr. Richardson was near the accident site, on Lake Meridian. He saw the airplane's approach to the lake and stated that the water was pretty calm. The airplane's approach looked normal to him and did not show any duress. The airplane leveled off, and before the floats touched the water, the airplane flipped over and there was a large splash. While the airplane was approaching, he had not noticed that the landing gear was down, but when the airplane was upside down, he saw that the gear was down.

Kristyn Blocher
Air Safety Investigator
AS-WPR

Date: 8/25/24

Subject: WPR24FA285, witnesses

Contact: Dave and Tamara Nason, [REDACTED]

The Nasons live at Norman-Grier/Crest Airpark and knew the accident pilot. The pilot had asked the Nasons for permission to park his airplane at their property during the July 4th holiday. He did not want it moored at his residence on the lake during the busy holiday lake activity. The Nasons agreed. The accident pilot retrieved the airplane after the holiday, then requested to return with it and store it there for a time, while he was out of town. He was delayed in returning for the airplane and extended the storage request to return for it at the end of August. According to the Nasons, the airplane "just sat there the whole time." It had been parked next to a hangar, outside and had not been disturbed. The morning of the accident, the pilot contacted the Nasons to let them know he'd be coming that day, to get the airplane. During his preflight, the pilot decided that the landing gear tires needed air. He started the airplane's engine, let it run for several minutes, then repositioned the airplane in front of the Nason's hangar to utilize his compressed air. He added air to the tires, then taxied the airplane for departure.

The Nasons observed the airplane's departure from Crest Airpark. The first attempt to take off was aborted on the runway, and the airplane taxied back to take off again. During the second take off attempt, the airplane completed the take off and departed. The Nasons watched the departure until the airplane flew out of sight and observed that the pilot "never pulled the gear up when he left."



Kristyn Blocher
Air Safety Investigator
AS-WPR

Date: 8/27/24

Subject: WPR24FA285, witness

Contact: Christopher Williams, [REDACTED]

Christopher reached out to NTSB, to submit his witness statement. He lives in a home across the lake from the accident pilot's home. He stated that he and his children often watched the airplane come and go from the lake and observed it fly over and land on the day of the accident. He observed the airplane overhead, and its final approach. He stated that he was slightly surprised to see him flying in "on a crummy, rainy day." The approach looked good to them, however, as soon as the airplane contacted water, it immediately flipped over. Christopher called 911 and went to the crash site in his boat. He was the second person/boat to arrive at the site and he jumped into the water to try to assist in extricating the pilot. He found the airplane's doors to be locked and debated with others in the water, about whether to break the windows or not. They thought there might be air in the cabin still, and worried about flooding the cabin with water if they broke the windows. About 15 minutes after the crash, emergency services arrived at the accident site and entered the water. They broke into the airplane and extricated the pilot.

Once the pilot was in the hands of emergency services, Christopher realized how cold he was and decided to head home with his boat, to warm up. At that time, he noticed that the landing gear was extended.

Kristyn Blocher
Air Safety Investigator
AS-WPR

Date: 8/27/24

Subject: WPR24FA285, witness

Contact: Carter Kennedy, [REDACTED]

Mr. Kennedy shared that he is a pilot for an airline and who's wedding had been scheduled for Saturday, the 24th. The wedding was to take place at a home on Meridian Lake. The accident pilot had planned to tie his airplane to the dock at the residence where the wedding was taking place so that it could be part of the backdrop for the ceremony and be used during photos.

Mr. Kennedy had recently flown as a passenger with the accident pilot, when he was returning the airplane to Norman-Grier/Crest Airpark, to park it at a friend's property. He noted that he had been impressed with the accident pilot - that he was a well disciplined, professional pilot. On the day they returned the airplane to Crest, Mr. Kennedy observed the Aerocet landing gear alert system when the accident pilot placed the gear in the extended position for landing at Crest, and the aural part of the system sounded loudly through their headsets, "Danger, Danger, Gear out, No water landing." The alert startled Mr. Kennedy - he had not been expecting it and he said that it reminded him of the type of aural alerts he would hear in the Boeing 737 such as "Wind Shear, Wind Shear". He described the alert as very clear, specific, and loud. At the time, the accident pilot seemed to anticipate the alert, then acknowledged it and let it play out. He explained the alert to Mr. Kennedy, looked at his wing mounted mirror to check the gear, and asked Mr. Kennedy to check the mirror on his side. The alarm phrase repeated itself a second time and then stopped. He did not notice whether or not the accident pilot pressed any buttons to deactivate it.

On the morning of 8/24, around 7am, Carter noticed the weather and texted the accident pilot about his plans to bring the airplane over from Crest, for the wedding that day. He wanted to alleviate any pressure he may have been feeling about bringing the airplane and told the accident pilot not to worry about bringing it, given how the weather looked, and that his safety was more important. The accident pilot

responded to him that "the weather was fine." At 10:02, Mr. Kennedy received a text message from the accident pilot that said, "On my way."

At the home where the wedding was to take place, Mr. Kennedy heard the airplane flying over, but he did not see the airplane's final approach or landing. Shortly after, he heard sirens.