



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Warrentown, Virginia	Accident Number:	ERA16CA024
Date & Time:	October 24, 2015, 10:00 Local	Registration:	N406X
Aircraft:	Maule M5	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:	Landing area undershoot	Injuries:	1 Minor
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The private pilot stated that this was his first flight in over a year due to cataract surgery. He planned to do a few touch and go landings to regain currency before departing on a local flight. The pilot said that upon his first attempt to land, he failed to maintain clearance of a cattle-guard fence that was located at the end of the grass runway. The airplane's main landing gear snagged the cattle-guard causing the nose of the airplane to dive into the ground. The airplane then nosed over inverted and came to rest upside down, resulting in substantial damage to the firewall, both sets of wing struts, the vertical stabilizer, and the rudder. The pilot said there were no mechanical deficiencies with the airplane and the accident was due to his lack of recent experience and ability to judge the airplane's height above the cattle-guard.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The pilot's failure to maintain clearance of a cattle-guard fence on landing. Contributing to the accident was his lack of recent flying experience.

Findings

Aircraft	Descent/approach/glide path - Not attained/maintained
Personnel issues	Monitoring environment - Pilot
Environmental issues	Fence/fence post - Contributed to outcome
Personnel issues	Recent experience - Pilot

Factual Information

History of Flight

Landing-flare/touchdown	Landing area undershoot (Defining event)
Landing-flare/touchdown	Collision with terr/obj (non-CFIT)
Landing-flare/touchdown	Nose over/nose down

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	78,Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	Unknown
Instrument Rating(s):	None	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 2 With waivers/limitations	Last FAA Medical Exam:	September 16, 2015
Occupational Pilot:	No	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	March 15, 2014
Flight Time:	720 hours (Total, all aircraft), 150 hours (Total, this make and model), 0 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 0 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 0 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Maule	Registration:	N406X
Model/Series:	M5 235C	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:	1976	Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	7039C
Landing Gear Type:	Tailwheel	Seats:	4
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	Unknown	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	2531 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:		Engine Manufacturer:	Lycoming
ELT:	Installed, not activated	Engine Model/Series:	0-540
Registered Owner:	RICHARDS THOMAS J	Rated Power:	235 Horsepower
Operator:	RICHARDS THOMAS J	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	HWY,336 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	5 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	10:35 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	139°
Lowest Cloud Condition:		Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	Broken / 6000 ft AGL	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	/	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/ None
Wind Direction:		Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30.29 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	6°C / 5°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:			
Departure Point:	Warrentown, VA (7VGO)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	Warrentown, VA (7VGO)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	10:00 Local	Type of Airspace:	Unknown

Airport Information

Airport:	Warrenton Air park 7VGO	Runway Surface Type:	Grass/turf
Airport Elevation:	442 ft msl	Runway Surface Condition:	Dry
Runway Used:	4	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:	2215 ft / 70 ft	VFR Approach/Landing:	Touch and go;Traffic pattern

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Minor	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:		Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 Minor	Latitude, Longitude:	38,-77(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Read, Leah
Additional Participating Persons:	David Riggins; FAA/FSDO; Dulles, VA
Original Publish Date:	February 8, 2016
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	This accident report documents the factual circumstances of this accident as described to the NTSB.
Investigation Docket:	https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=92229

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) is an independent federal agency charged by Congress with investigating every civil aviation accident in the United States and significant events in other modes of transportation—railroad, transit, highway, marine, pipeline, and commercial space. We determine the probable causes of the accidents and events we investigate, and issue safety recommendations aimed at preventing future occurrences. In addition, we conduct transportation safety research studies and offer information and other assistance to family members and survivors for each accident or event we investigate. We also serve as the appellate authority for enforcement actions involving aviation and mariner certificates issued by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and US Coast Guard, and we adjudicate appeals of civil penalty actions taken by the FAA.

The NTSB does not assign fault or blame for an accident or incident; rather, as specified by NTSB regulation, “accident/incident investigations are fact-finding proceedings with no formal issues and no adverse parties ... and are not conducted for the purpose of determining the rights or liabilities of any person” (Title 49 *Code of Federal Regulations* section 831.4). Assignment of fault or legal liability is not relevant to the NTSB’s statutory mission to improve transportation safety by investigating accidents and incidents and issuing safety recommendations. In addition, statutory language prohibits the admission into evidence or use of any part of an NTSB report related to an accident in a civil action for damages resulting from a matter mentioned in the report (Title 49 *United States Code* section 1154(b)). A factual report that may be admissible under 49 *United States Code* section 1154(b) is available [here](#).