

27 March, 2020

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Microsoft

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Narrative for the events of 27 March 2020, 0015, CTL 3, KTPA to KOPF

Event:

When making my approach to landing at KOPF, at approximately 0015, I attempted a landing with the landing gear retracted.

Narrative:

At 1,000ft, 4 miles from the approach end of runway 12, KOPF, visual approach in clear weather (KOPF WX; 0515Z Winds calm, Vis 10, Skies Clear, 23/20, Altimeter 30.04), I began the flows and GUMPS checklist for the descent on final. As I turned on the fuel pumps I picked up significant interference on Comm 1. I immediately loaded the CTAF frequency on Comm 2, switched radios and continued the GUMPS checklist. The approach was uneventful, on speed, with two white and two red on the Precision Approach Path Indicator. After the flare I had a nice, slow sink rate and an anticipated touchdown approximately 500 ft past my aiming point (1,000ft markers). As soon as I reduced power the gear warning horn activated and I initiated an immediate go around. I followed the flows and when I reached for the landing gear handle realized that I had neglected to lower the landing gear. I did not notice any sound of contact with the runway and a cursory inspection at the ramp revealed no damage. I notified Dispatch of what occurred and since the couriers were waiting I immediately loaded the freight and continued the mission. Upon my return to KVDF I performed a more thorough Post-flight Inspection and that is when I noticed the marker beacon antenna was shaved off and the sheeting on the bottom of the aircraft had scrape marks. I left a message with the Assistant Chief Pilot and after a few minutes with no response contacted you.

Causative Factors:

The interference on the radio distracted me from the landing checklist. The interference on the radio has been an intermittent but ongoing issue. My cognitive process shifted from the checklist to switching radios and quickly trying to find a common factor with the previous events that would allow me to make a detailed report of the malfunction to our Maintenance Department. (The only time this problem occurs is when the ship is at TPA, usually when I am on final. I haven't been able to determine if this is related to some form of feedback from the boost pumps, cross feed from a tuned ILS or some other problem. The interference is strong enough to block incoming traffic from ATC) When I shifted back to the landing flows I skipped the 'Undercarriage Down' portion of the GUMPS checklist and once I thought the flows were complete focused on maintaining the proper approach path.

I am baffled at the breakdown of my normal routine which involves going through the GUMPS checklist 3-4 times after getting established on the glide path/slope and a final glance at the gear indicator just before the flare, to include verbalizing the checklist as well as visually and physically verifying the controls are in the proper position . I was tired but it would take a conversation with a Dr. for me to accept fatigue as a causative factor. I slept for 8 hours prior to starting the run, ate a nutritious meal and was properly hydrated. No alcohol since Saturday (counted the six pack, there are 4 beers remaining) and no medications other than aspirin for a sore back and my normal vitamins. Other than the issue with the radio the cockpit was sterile, no distractions.

Recommendations:

Use the paper checklist on final (I use it in all phases of flight with the exception of Before Landing when, due to workload, I rely on the mnemonic 'GUMPS'.

Reinforce the use of the three primary considerations of flight, Aviate, Navigate, Communicate, don't let non-critical equipment issues cause a distraction.

Summary:

I am nonplussed by this event. I am simply unable to explain, at least to my satisfaction, how this could have happened. I enjoy the challenge of the way we fly and it is my wish to continue my association with Central Air Southwest.

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I am available to provide any assistance or additional information as necessary to quickly resolve this issue and return to a flying status.

Sincerely,

Grover P. Cates III
Line Pilot

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