



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Joshua D. Cawthra
Senior Aviation Accident Investigator
Western Pacific Region

Date: 7/24/2018
Person Contacted: Randy Foster (Left Seat Pilot)
NTSB Accident Number: WPR18FA201

Narrative:

During an in-person interview with Mr. Foster, he reported that the evening previous to the accident, he went to bed around 11pm, and woke up around 6am, and arrived at the airport around 7am. Mr. Foster stated that no significant life events were occurring in his life, and that the morning of the accident, he felt rested and everything was normal.

After arriving at the airport, he went inside the CAF building, and met with Greg Squires, Mark Davis, Chris Dowell, and David Bonorden were at the conference table. Mr. Foster stated that he set down and started discussing with them what they were going to do for the flight(s), when he was presented a weight and balance. Upon review of the weight and balance, he recalled that the airplane was right at gross weight, and CG was at the middle of the envelope, he folded it, wrote down the intended route waypoints, and discussed the weather along the route. Mr. Foster said that the original plan was to go into Madison, Wisconsin to obtain a rental car, however, as they didn't need one now, they planned for a fuel stop in Missouri before proceeding to Oshkosh, Wisconsin.

Mr. Foster stated that he asked Greg while in the office if he was comfortable taking off with a heavy airplane, and Greg responded yes, and informed him that his previous tailwheel time was in the Piper Pawnee and Aeronca Chief amongst a few other light taildraggers. Mr. Foster added that he normally doesn't let people he hadn't flown with previously fly the airplane until he's flown with them a bit.

Mr. Foster reiterated that he told Greg that they were heavy and asked him if he was comfortable taking off with a heavy airplane, which he said yes. Mr. Foster added that he it was requested to him to let Greg fly, so he can get more experience, however, did not recall who told him to do so. In addition, Mr. Foster stated that he's hesitant and cautious to let people fly that he doesn't know until he's flown with them.

Mr. Foster stated that he then went outside to conduct a quick preflight inspection of the airplane externally, before he got inside, checked the cockpit, placed his headset and ipads inside, before exiting the airplane. He mentioned that their intended departure was at 0800, however, everyone was not in a rush, and recalls they boarded the airplane around 0900.

Mr. Foster continued to report that they boarded the airplane, engines were started, and he taxied the airplane to the runup area, and turned crosswind due to lack space near the end of the runway. Mr. Foster and Greg performed a runup, temperatures were up, and he noted everything was "fine." He further stated that he always taxies the airplane into position on the runway and locked the tailwheel. He decided that he didn't like how things looked, so he unlocked the tailwheel, let the airplane roll forward 6 to 7 inches, re locked the tailwheel, and verified it was locked, and recalled looking at the big flag by the airport that showed a crosswind, however, the windsocks were right down the runway.

At this point, Greg, gave Mr. Foster his pre-takeoff briefing, which included Greg telling Mr. Foster he would set the power to 30 inches and afterword, Mr. Foster was to set takeoff power for him. Mr. Foster stated that as the airplane started to roll, and within the first few feet, Greg had pushed forward on the elevator, and he told him not to push forward, and let it come up.

He didn't recall the airplane swerving to the right, however, recalled telling Greg not to push the tail up because it was heavy, and remembers the airplane swerving to the left. Mr. Foster said that he yelled right rudder three times, before saying "my airplane" shortly thereafter, and that he got his hands on the control yoke, he noticed that either the tail started to come back down, or the main wheels were either light or just coming off the ground. Mr. Foster said that he knew he was slow, however, didn't know what the airspeed was, as he was looking outside, noting they were heading towards the airport fuel pump tanks. He said that he tried to ease it [the airplane] over [to the runway] and set it back down, when he felt the shutter of a stall, and the airplane turning left, and impacting the ground. In addition, he remembered the right main landing gear collapsing and the right wing hitting the ground. As the airplane came to a stop, he observed fire in front of the airplane about eyelevel, and could feel the heat, while hearing Chris yelling unbuckle, get out, get out. Mr. Foster looked over to the right, and saw that Greg was gone and he realized the heat began increasing, and he should get out of the airplane. As he approached the edge of the door, he heard Chris yell to him if everyone was out of the airplane. Mr. Foster said that he turned around and went up to the forward bulkhead to verify everyone was out of the airplane, and noted that the heat was even more intense, and he returned to the door, and jumped out of the cargo door, telling Chris he didn't see anyone else in the airplane. Afterward, they egressed to the west side of the runway.

Mr. Foster added that he thought that he took control of the airplane when the left main gear started to go into the grass, and that he estimated its speed to be about 60 knots, however, wasn't sure as he wasn't looking inside. He further added that when the airplane was swerving to the left, Greg wasn't using any aileron.

Mr. Foster further stated that during the takeoff, "it went bad so fast" and it "didn't make since to him why it went right." He added that he knew Greg recently got his type rating in the DC3 and that he was more "current" in the airplane than he was, and recalled Greg mentioning that he had 10 to 15 hours in the airplane, and he had flown with Simon, a unit instructor pilot previously.

Mr. Foster said Simon, who was the instructor pilot who had previously flown with Greg a week prior called him sometime during the week and told him that Greg did "pretty good and he'll be alright" or

that "Greg did ok and should be ok," which Mr. Foster said that was the determining factor of him having Greg do the takeoff, unless when he met him and didn't have a good feeling.

When asked if he was positive that Greg knew he would be performing the takeoff, Mr. Foster replied that he was 100% sure that Greg knew he was going to do the takeoff, however, doesn't recall if he had ever asked Greg if he had ever flown the DC3 in a heavy configuration. Mr. Foster said that he thought that he only asked Greg if he was comfortable doing so.

When asked why he didn't abort the takeoff, Mr. Foster replied that he didn't recall attempting a rejected takeoff because both of his hands were on the control yoke. Mr. Foster was also asked when he usually will bring the tail up, he replied that he usually pushes the tail up "when it feels good," maybe 30 knots or more, but doesn't have a set airspeed.

When asked if he had briefed the flight with the crew chief, Mr. Foster said that he had talked to him about the oil, draining of the sumps, and that he got into the airplane with Greg while the crew chief was briefing the passengers. MR. Foster also mentioned that he had pulled the propeller blades through that morning before the airplane was moved out of the hangar.

Mr. Foster reported that his total flight time was 12,000 hours +, 4,500 hours + tailwheel, 2,500+ hours in the left seat of a DC3, and about 1,000 hours in a turbine powered DC3. He added that he started flying freight in Georgia in May, 1997, and in September, 1997, moved to a captain position. After flying there for a few years, he switched companies to Miami Valley in Middle Town, Ohio, and flew there for several months before he was hired at Basler in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, as the production test pilot and director of operations, where he remained working until 2001. Mr. Foster said his current job is a corporate pilot, operating two Citation 560's, an Aero Commander 500, and a Cessna 180. Mr. Foster estimated that he last flew the DC3 about 1 month prior to the accident. He added that when he was in the freight part of flying DC3's, he let low time inexperienced pilots' takeoff a loaded airplane all the time. Mr. Foster added that it's a double edge sword, they don't fly enough to keep "current," but they also need to get the younger guys experience.

When asked about what copilot would fly next, Mr. Foster responded that Greg was to fly the first leg, and then Chris would fly the second leg into Oshkosh.

Mr. Foster thought that Greg got his training through Dan Gryder in Arkansas, which is a DC3 school for people that want training in them.



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Joshua D. Cawthra
Senior Aviation Accident Investigator
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Date: 7/25/2018
Person Contacted: Randy Foster (Left Seat Pilot)
NTSB Accident Number: WPR18FA201

Narrative:

During a telephone interview with Mr. Foster, he recalled that while at the table in the break room, he asked Greg if he was comfortable taking off with a loaded airplane, which Greg responded "yes." Mr. Foster said that until they got into the airplane, they didn't do any briefings. Greg called out items on the checklist, and Mr. Foster conducted them, until they were on the runway. At this point, Greg gave him a standard takeoff briefing.

Mr. Foster recalled Greg telling him he would advance power to 30 inches, have Mr. Foster set takeoff power. Mr. Foster remembered thinking as the airplane started rolling, "I don't like this" and didn't recall the airplane swerving to the right whatsoever. However, he remembered swerving left, saying right rudder 3 times and shortly after, he thinks, is when he took over. Mr. Foster said that the airplane was swerving left "pretty good" when he took over and thinks that if he would have saw a correction inputted by Greg, he wouldn't have taken over control of the airplane. Mr. Foster added that he called there was no aileron input by Greg at all during the takeoff.

Mr. Foster said that he doesn't remember if he had discussed aileron effectiveness at all with Greg and does not recall making any call outs regarding airspeed. Mr. Foster only recalled that when Greg shoved the control yoke / elevators all the way forward to the stop, he told him don't do that, let the tail come up on its own. Mr. Foster thinks that this occurred, things were starting to go bad.

When asked at what point he had taken control of the airplane, Mr. Foster stated that he was 100% sure he didn't take control of the airplane until it was on the far left of the runway, possibly after the left main wheel was off the runway. Mr. Foster said that he didn't recall any airspeeds as he was focusing outside the airplane. He said things went bad so fast, he didn't have a chance to look back inside.

Mr. Foster further stated that there were no mechanical issues with the airplane prior to the accident.



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Joshua D. Cawthra
Senior Aviation Accident Investigator
Western Pacific Region

Date: 2/27/19
Person Contacted: Randy Foster (Left Seat Pilot)
NTSB Accident Number: WPR18FA201

Narrative:

During a telephone conversation, Mr. Foster stated that the day of the accident he was wearing a compression wrap on one of his knees. He didn't remember which one. He said that there was nothing wrong with his knee that would have precluded him from flying the airplane. Additionally, Mr. Foster added that he took it off after the accident, and his knee was never sore again.