



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Joshua D. Cawthra
Senior Aviation Accident Investigator
Western Pacific Region

Date: 7/22/2018
Person Contacted: Greg Squires (Right Seat Pilot)
NTSB Accident Number: WPR18FA201

Narrative:

During an in-person interview, Mr. Squires reported that he lives about 35 miles southwest of the airport. Mr. Squires said that he usually goes to bed about 11pm, and up at 6am, however, the evening before the accident, he was in bed around 1030pm, and got up that morning around 515am. Mr. Squires arrived at the airport at 7am.

Mr. Squires further reported that prior to boarding, during a briefing with Randy Foster, they discussed that his time was low in the airplane, as he wanted Randy to know it. They then conducted a preflight brief and when they got into the cockpit, performed a challenge / response checklist, covering the items for engine start, pre-taxi check list. Mr. Squires said that Randy taxied the airplane from the ramp to the run-up area., where they performed the run-up with the challenge / response check list. He mentioned that the wind was right down the runway, about 8 knots, and that they verified trim settings.

Mr. Squires said that Randy then taxied the airplane into place and told him to do the takeoff. He added that he briefed the takeoff with "push throttles to 30 inches, then he'll give randy the throttles, conduct a power check, and that Randy was to call out airspeed alive, v1, climb out, etc.. Mr. Squires recalled that he had also asked Randy if everything was set and they are ready to go. Mr. Squires stated that as power was advanced, airplane started to move, and shortly after, the airplane began to veer to the right, at which time Randy said he had the airplane, and the airplane turned left. As the airplane exited the left side of the runway, the left wing came up, followed by the airplane going to the right, and then banking to the left again, before landing about 90 degrees to the runway, facing east. Mr. Squires said that after Randy took control of the airplane, he didn't touch anything.

Mr. Squires stated that as the airplane came to rest, he saw the right engine separate, and dumped seat belt, saw the fire, which seemed like it started on the right side of the airplane, and was the second to last person to exit the airplane. As he ran down the aisle, recalled no one in the airplane and that no fire

was inside the airplane at that point. He recalled that the aisle was clear of obstructions, and he exited through the aft door.

When asked if the tailwheel was locked, Mr. Squires replied that the normal procedure is that as they taxi out, the pilot taxiing would lock the tailwheel and make sure it locked. Mr. Squires could not recall if Randy locked the tailwheel as he was looking out the right side to make sure they were clearing the runway lights, and never looked down to verify if the lock was engaged.

During the interview, Mr. Squires added that he recalled the tail was just coming up when/ the first deviation to the right occurred and that's when Randy said he had the airplane. He didn't hear Randy say anything else other than an expletive soon after.

When asked when he knew he would be conducting the takeoff, Mr. Squires responded that prior to the engines running, but while they were in the cockpit, Randy told him that he was doing the takeoff and during a brief, they did talk about the airplane being heavier than what he had flown, and that he would have to push the tail up. Mr. Squires said that the thought was in his mind that he'd be doing the takeoff, due to the schedule.

When asked about his experience, Mr. Squires stated that his total flight time was about 8,000 hours, with about 4,000 in tailwheel equipped airplanes, of which included Piper Pawnee, Aeronca Chief, Piper PA-18, and Piper J3s. He said that he tows gliders a lot and is a Designated Pilot Examiner. He added that about 15 years prior, he had the opportunity for "some DC3 time" but could not recall how much. He added that he previously owned a Cessna 310 for 35 years, however, had no big twin-engine time or big taildragger time. Mr. Squires further stated that he did his Pilot in Command (PIC) type rating the DC3 in May, 2018, which included about 8 hours in the DC3, plus 1.6 hours on a check ride.

When asked about what he was wearing at the time of the accident, Mr. Squires stated that he was dressed in a full Nomex flight suit.

Mr. Squires reported that he flown with Mr. Simon Diver, who was a check pilot with that CAF location. Mr. Squires said that he flew with Simon twice, once on July 13th, and again on the 14th. He recalled that during the first flight, he was absolute sure they did the checklist and for some reason, when they lined up on the runway, the tailwheel didn't lock. A normal takeoff and landing were conducted with the tailwheel off set and not locked. Mr. Squires said he talked to the Unit Leader/mechanic for the unit, however, did not fill out any airplane specific squawk sheet. The following morning, they jacked up the airplane, locked the tailwheel, and then conducted various ground tests, all of which resulted in the tailwheel locking normally.



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During an in-person interview, Mr. Squires reported that he did his training in Siloam Springs, Arkansas, with Dan Gryder in early May, 2018. Mr. Squires stated he was at Dan's for 5 days, getting a PIC check out, which was in the left seat, and left seat only. Mr. Squires stated he was never in the right seat during that time. He recalled that the DC3 was difficult to taxi but flying the airplane he felt that he never had issues with, all of the instrument approaches were to standards, however, takeoff and landings were something you need experience with and practice with. Mr. Squires said when he took the check ride, his landings and takeoffs were all spot on. His checkride was conducted with Charlie Tilman, who was a national resource designated pilot examiner. Mr. Squires stated that where he took his training, they had a lot of online books and a standard training syllabus and added that it was like drinking from a fire hose, as a lot of ground school was conducted. Mr. Squires stated that when he left Dan's school, he felt like he had a license to learn in the DC3.

When asked about why he wanted a type rating in the DC3, Mr. Squires responded that a friend of his wanted to do his DC3 rating, and that Dan would only do 2 at a time. Originally, they going to go to aero metal in Portland, and his friend would do a PIC check and Mr Squires would do an SIC check, however, days before it fell through. His friend talked to Dan, and Dan said he would do it, but only do 2 PIC checks. Mr. Squires said that Dan said come on up and he'd take care of the difference, as Mr. Squires didn't want to pay for a PIC check.

When asked about how long he's been in the CAF, Mr. Squires stated that he's been in the unit for many years, just never been active outside of providing audio for their airshows. Mr. Squires stated that discussions occurred back and forth with the unit that he was a DPE, and at some point, down the road, there might be some possibility he might be able to be able to add the DC3 to his letter and do check rides in the DC3, which would help the unit later down the road. He added that there was no pressure at all for him to do that by the unit.

Mr. Squires further reported that during his two flights with Simon Diver, specifically during the second day, it was very windy with a substantial cross wind. He recalled that that he attempted a few takeoffs and landings, of which were "just ok," and they decided because of the wind, Simon would do the pilot flying tasks, and Mr. Squires would do the non-flying pilot tasks, which included a few takeoffs and landings. Mr. Squires said that he felt that his takeoff and landings were very different in the accident airplane than the airplane he had flown in Arkansas and commented to Simon that the accident airplane seemed more squirrely than the one in Arkansas. Mr. Squires said that at the completion of the training, he felt adequate for performing SIC functions, knew he had a lot to learn, and felt Simon knew he was ready.

Mr. Squires said that during his first day of training with Simon, during takeoff, the airplane was more squirrely than he had expected. After they came back and landed, Mark, the unit leader, commented about the tailwheel, and Mr. Squires squaked it. The next morning, Mr. Squires came in early, and they jacked the airplane up, looked at the tailwheel, ran a number of tests on it to see if it was locking or not, and the tailwheel did lock. They thought maybe it was due to weight, they pulled it out, did some yawing, verified the tailwheel did lock.

When asked how the visibility was from the right seat, Mr. Squires said that when sitting in the right seat, visibility was fine, small windows, had adequate visibility out the window, and usually used a set of rivets to line up with. He added that he regularly he flies from the right seat, and switching back and forth in small airplanes, didn't bug him at all, and that he didn't feel uncomfortable in the dc3.

Mr. Squires reported that the morning when he showed up, it was his first time ever meeting Randy, or even talking to him. He said that they were talking by the cargo door, and he told Randy, for full disclosure, that he's low time in the airplane, and has not had much experience, and almost all his taildragger time was in small airplanes, and he said he wanted Randy to understand that. Mr. Squires said Randy replied that he was a 4,000-hour dc3 pilot and that there weren't going to be any problems, and that it was a "pussycat," and if you could taxi it, you could fly it. Mr. Squires recalled that Randy did comment that the airplane would be heavier than he was used to, and it might be necessary to help the tail up. Mr. Squires said they also discussed the route of flight, weather, because of cheap fuel and long runways. He added that Randy told him that he was going to do the takeoff and landing, and it might have been done while they were standing next to the airplane. Mr. Squires said Randy and himself had a brief with the crew chief, talking about the destination, loading of the airplane, and fuel in the airplane.

Mr. Squires further commented that when in the airplane, he was reading the checklist, Randy was performing the tasks and he was calling them out, with some shifting in responsibilities due to engine starts (left/right side). Randy taxied the airplane to the runup area and did the run ups. While in the run up, Mr. Squires did the checklist, Randy did the tasks and said he'd taxi onto the runway, which he did, called on the check list, final items, tailwheel to go. While taxiing out, Mr. Squires recalled looking out to the right, to see where the airplane was, Randy positioned the airplane, didn't like it, moved it, and stopped. Mr. Squires didn't recall if Randy locked the tailwheel or if he checked it but did ask Randy if they were all ready to go, and Randy replied affirmative.

Mr. Squires said he wanted to do a pre-takeoff brief, which included that he would bring the power to 30 inches with brakes on, at that point, Randy should take the throttles, and that point to give Mr. Squires a power check, call airspeed alive, and v 1, at v1 they'll rotate, pitch for 110, gear up, meto power. Mr. Squires said that very soon into the takeoff roll, he felt the airplane was turning slightly

right, and Randy said I've got it, which he responded you have the flight controls. Mr. Squires estimated it was less than 10 seconds into the takeoff. He didn't recall the airplane going to the left when he had the controls, but recalls that when Randy took the controls, it went left. Mr. Squires further stated that when it [the airplane] was starting to over right, he applied "some left rudder," and wanted to parallel the centerline, but he [Randy] took it away before he could. He added that just prior to that, he was applying forward pressure on the control yoke, and thinks that Randy said that applying the forward pressure was early. Mr. Squires stated that no call outs were made as to airspeed, etc.

When asked about power settings at the CAF compared to training, Mr. Squires stated that during training, the airplane was light, and doesn't remember what power settings they used after 30".