

# JOSHUA HEINIG STATEMENT FOR N35408 HARD LANDING INCIDENT

(18 AUG 2021)

Will and I prepared for the flight as usual. We got our weather from The Alaska Aviation Weather Unit and we performed our weight and balance. We had plenty of fuel for the trip. If I remember correctly, it was at least three hours and thirty minutes worth of fuel. Everything was in limits and ready to go. The weather was sunny with a few clouds that were high. We called flight ops and let them know of our intentions. Will called Kenai Flight Service and filed a flight plan. We performed the preflight and determined that the aircraft was fit for flying. We used the checklist and started the engine, and made our way to the run up area. After the run up was complete, and the emergency actions were discussed, we requested to taxi to runway 06 at Elmendorf for a climbing goose bay departure, altitude deviation, and an early turnout. We were cleared to taxi to runway 06, and eventually cleared to take off and said runway. We were cleared for an altitude deviation, and an early turnout, so we proceeded with our goose bay departure under those parameters. Once we were cleared for our frequency change, we changed frequencies to contact Palmer radio to open our flight plan. We were holding our altitude at 2500 feet and we were making our way to Birchwood airport. We received the AWOS, and made our intentions known for touch and goes on runway 20R 10 miles southeast of the airport. There were a couple of aircraft in the pattern. There was a Civil Air Patrol that was towing a glider and giving children rides. There was also other traffic leaving Birchwood and also arriving at Birchwood. Once we were downwind making right traffic for runway 20R, I made the radio call over the CTAF of our intentions for touch and goes. Once we were abeam our touch down point, Will pulled the throttle back to 1500 RPM's and added the first notch of flaps. We started a nice stabilized approach to runway 20R. We turned based to 20R, made our radio call, and added the next notch of flaps. Next, we turned final for 20R touch and goes, and made our radio call. Will made a nice stabilized approach and flared a little early and we came down a little harder than what I expected of him. It had been 3 weeks since he had flown, so rust was to be expected. We did three more touch and goes with the same result every time. He was having trouble timing the flare. It was the opposite from his earlier trouble from previous flights when he was flaring to late. Anyway, the incident occurred on the next touch and go. I told Will that I would tell him to start flaring. We made a nice stabilized approach the exact same way we had the four previous touch and goes. I prepared myself for what could possibly happen. I was on full alert, and I readied my hands on the yoke. His approach was nice and his airspeed was good and then I told him to start his flare. This is when he did something that he had never done before. He pulled back on the yoke hard and we side loaded to the right. Before I knew it, our nose was pointed way up, and we were drifting off the runway. I immediately took control of the aircraft by keeping the nose up, and maneuvering the aircraft to halt our drift to the right and to remain on the runway. Not only did I not want to leave the runway to keep from crashing, but there were kids about a 100 meters just down from us on the taxi way waiting for their turn in the glider to think about. Holding our nose high, and using left rudder to get our nose pointed down the runway allowed us to stay on the runway, but it caused us to fall out of the air down to the runway and we landed extremely hard. Hard enough to where I wanted to look at the aircraft. We pulled off the runway and we parked the aircraft and we inspected it. We were both in shock, but we were both alright. We inspected the aircraft and found no visible damage. All the electrical components worked, the wings and tail horizontal stabilizer and elevator looked good and functioned free and correct. The ailerons functioned free and correct. At that time we decided to fly back to Elmendorf. We did our checks and our run up and took off to the south. We flew back to Elmendorf, and I landed on runway 06 at Elmendorf, and I taxied back to the Aero club. I talked to Will to make sure that he was still ok. He said that

he was. We tied the aircraft down and told the next pilot in the aircraft what we had experienced. I made a call to Wally, our chief pilot, and explained the situation. I then called Robert Kibbe, our mechanic, and explained the situation to him. At that time I did not believe that there was a tail strike because neither Will or I heard or felt anything. So, because of that, Wally and Robert said that it could be flown, but I needed to write it up as a hard landing in the books so that it could be inspected later. Remarks complete.

Joshua Heinig

CFI [REDACTED]

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