The following is a list of type and hours in each aircraft I've flown.

F/A-18A-D Hornet: 1064.2 (current in this aircraft)
T-34C Turbo Mentor: 216.3 (current in this aircraft)
T-45C Goshawk: 173.5
Cessna 172: 213.2
Piper Seneca: 7.6
Citabria: 6.4 (current in this aircraft)
Marchetti SF-206: 6.6 (current in this aircraft)
Total Flight Time: 1690.8
Total PIC Time: 1300.5
Total Turbine Time: 1454.0
Total Turbine PIC: 1129.6
Total ASEL: 616.0
Total AMEL: 1074.8

Military Credentials:
4 plane flight leader, Aviation Safety Officer, Crew Resource Management Instructor, NATOPS Evaluator, F/A-18A-D Post Maintenance Functional Check Flight Stan Evaluator, T-34C Post Maintenance Check Pilot, F/A-18A-D Instructor, T-34C Instructor.

Civilian Credentials:
ATP AMEL, ASEL Commercial Privileges, Tailwheel endorsement, CFI / CFII.

Statement:

On 24 August 2016, I was the Pilot in Command of the mishap aircraft. The flight lead and I spent a considerable amount of time briefing the flight earlier in the day discussing everything from takeoff to landing in great detail.

I helped my passenger strap into the plane and took the time to explain to him how the safety belt operated as this was his first time in this type of aircraft. I had flown the exact same flight the day prior almost at the exact same time under similar conditions. As I was helping the passenger strap in, I noticed the takeoff trim was not set for takeoff, so I paused and set the takeoff trim to the appropriate setting. I have a few hours in this aircraft and went methodically through the checklist item by item because I am a firm believer that if you go through a checklist you can only do things correctly. By going through the checklist, I would read off the step, physically touch the item, note where it was and then read out the action per the checklist to ensure the switch is in the correct position. The only abnormality to the checklist was the transponder circuit breaker. The day prior, when we were flying in formation, air traffic control (ATC) was complaining that our transponders were stepping on each other. I could not get the transponder to squawk standby, so I elected to turn off the transponder via pulling the circuit breaker. Everything else on the checklist was set appropriately.

We taxied as a flight to the engine run up area and performed the engine run up checklist. The only abnormality here was the magneto check. They initially did not check correctly, I leaned the mixture, reset the mixture to rich and the magneto's checked good. Once we were done with the run up and waiting for the flight lead, I performed the takeoff checklist, which included a wipe out of the flight controls. I elected to hold off on the rudder pedals until we were taxing due to the fact that this aircraft has nose wheel steering. I did not want the nose wheel to grind on the pavement. I held off the lights, mixture to rich, and the fuel boost pump until we were taking the runway. Once we started to taxi, I moved the rudder pedals left and right and everything felt as if it was normal. There are no mirrors in this aircraft and I did not physically turn my head to see if the rudder was giving me the appropriate response because I was concerned with the safe taxi of the aircraft. Approaching the hold short, I asked the passenger if he was ready to go, to which he replied "Yes".

The flight switched to tower frequency, I heard the takeoff call, the clearance for takeoff. The flight lead took the runway centerline and I held roughly on a heading of 330 degrees waiting for him to start his takeoff roll. Once the flight lead started his takeoff roll, I taxied to runway heading, 240, and held until the flight lead broke the runway surface and took off.

I slowly pushed the throttle to max and noted a right to left cross wind (very light) and mentioned it to the passenger and applied a little more right rudder and right aileron. Once the airspeed came alive, I commented "airspeeds alive, engine instruments are in the green". Approaching rotation speed, I gently lifted the nose wheel off the runway and held that attitude waiting for the aircraft to become airborne.

My normal habit patterns for this aircraft during takeoff are as follows: Note airspeed alive, check the engine instruments, come back up and cross reference airspeed. I gently pull the nose wheel off the runway and maintain directional control with rudder. I hold that nose attitude until the aircraft flies off the runway, note the positive rate of climb, bring the gear up, give slight forward stick pressure, a little nose down trim, and accelerate to 90 MPH and bring the remaining flaps up.

This rotation was different. Once I lifted the nose wheel off the ground, I noted a slight drift to the left, which was nothing substantial. 2-3 seconds post the nose wheel coming off the runway, the airplane was airborne. There aircraft rolled slightly to the right (because of the crosswind correction). After the roll to the right, the airplane started a very gentle roll to the left and a yaw to the left that I could not correct. I knew immediately at this instance that this was not a normal take off. I made a deliberate decision to leave the landing gear in the down position because I thought that we may touch down and I did not want to touch down on the belly of the aircraft.

I understand how P Factor and lift works. I teach F/A-18 pilots in the sim that just because you are in a jet aircraft does not mean that you can just pull the nose back. Sometimes, you need to push forward on the stick to get lift back on the wings to get the airplane to fly. I could not control the aircraft. I vividly remember pushing all my force on the right rudder so much so

that the parachute was digging in the bottom right of my back as I was pushing as hard as could on the right rudder. I also noted a slow roll to the left and tried to correct with right aileron. I could no longer see the runway from the left side of the aircraft as I was sitting on the right. I thought we were over the dirt between the taxiway and the runway. At this point, I knew we were going to crash. I felt as if the airplane was facing 360 and we were traveling 030 (these are not the real headings, I just want to point out that the aircraft was facing one direction and traveling another). I asked the passenger to help me with the stick as I thought my stick may not be responsive. I knew there were buildings in the direction we were flying. I did not want to climb over these buildings and crash into a building outside the airfield boundaries. I wanted to put the airplane down within the confines of the airfield. Shortly after thinking this, I felt what I thought was the left wing tip tank hit, followed immediately by hitting the ground and feeling the aircraft slide towards a closed hangar.

We hit the ground and slid towards the hangar at about a 30ish degree angle, meaning the front of the aircraft did not appear to impact the hangar first. Again, it felt as if the airplane was pointed 360 and we were traveling 030 (again, these are not exact headings, I am merely pointing out that we are skidding). I thought to myself that I was going to die just prior to hitting the hangar door. I was conscious and awake throughout the entire process.

The aircraft came to a stop and I immediately looked over my body expecting to see or feel blood and massive damage to my body. The hangar door had come into the cockpit and collapsed and stopped inches from my face. The canopy had opened a few inches. I looked at my legs expecting to see the instrument panel pinning my legs, but to my surprise, I was completely fine. I asked the passenger if he was ok, to which he replied "yes, I am ok". I told him "we need to get out of the cockpit, but the canopy is jammed". I unstrapped my safety belt and punched through the back half of the canopy to try and get out that way. This is how I ended up with the scratches and cuts on my left arm. There was not enough room to get out of the cockpit that way. I noticed the engine had basically turned 180 degrees to the right and came to a stop on the right wing a few feet from where I was sitting. There were two wires connecting the engine to the aircraft. I noticed fuel spilling out of the engine and immediately reached to bring the mixture to cutoff.

The engine caught fire and I informed the passenger that we needed to get out of the aircraft immediately because there was a fire. I smashed the canopy just to my right and cleared out a little hole with my hands, again this is where I got the cuts and scratches on my right arm and hand. As I was doing this, I heard someone say "Are you ok??" to which I replied "There are two of us in here, we are ok, but there is a fire and we need help".

The passenger was having difficulty with his safety belt and I reached over to help him undo his safety belt. I climbed out as the fire was being extinguished and hit my right arm on something hot receiving a little burn.

The passenger was still having trouble get out of the aircraft as his parachute was not allowing him to come out. I reached back into the cockpit to help undo the parachute from the

passenger and help pull him up out of his seat and through the tiny hole in the canopy. The passenger gets out of the aircraft, I help him down and off the wing of the airplane and out of the hangar. At this time, I can hear the emergency responders coming to the scene and we wait for them to arrive.

I cannot account of the drift left post becoming airborne. The aircraft was unresponsive to any of my control inputs. I flew that aircraft like I had flown it each time before and how I was taught. I fought with the aircraft for control all the way to impacting the ground.

Please, if you require any other information from me you can contact me at the following.

Cell phone: [redacted]
Email: [redacted]

[redacted]

8/27/2016