

## **N708WC – Accident statement**

**James W Strong Owner-Pilot**

**On September 26<sup>th</sup> 2023 I finished what I thought was a thorough pre-flight of Falco N708WC and pulled the plane out of the hangar.**

**Startup and taxi did not reveal any anomalies.**

**Taxied from my hangar (T-37) to Spot 5 for engine run-up and final checks. Every indicator was in the middle or on the high side of “green”.**

**Contacted SFB Ground for taxi instructions and requested “closed traffic”.**

**Taxied up to the departure end of Rwy 9C at Lima intersection, locked the canopy and ran through the before takeoff checklist. Everything was “good”, set, and ready for take-off.**

**SFB TWR controller instructed me to fly upwind until advised and cleared me for takeoff.**

**Acknowledged the takeoff clearance, taxied into position, verified 9C and began my takeoff roll.**

**Vr, V1, and I was airborne. Instruments still in the green.**

**Within a few seconds at @100' the right engine access cover flew open and was standing straight up in the “fully open” position.**

**This immediately caught my attention and I called the TWR to let them know the engine cover, (not sure of my exact verbiage), was open I needed to land.**

**I slowed down and was still @100” in the air approaching the end of 9C.**

**TWR cleared me to land on 9L, (which meant I had to make 2 left turns, fly the full length of 9L, make 2 more left turns, then land.**

**I was expecting to be on the ground ASAP; maybe a right turn to land on 18, but the seconds were ticking away and I was aware of the traffic in the pattern on 9R.**

**So, I complied and turned left staying low and slow hoping to keep the open door from breaking off.**

**However, I was paying so much attention to the open door that I let my airspeed get too low with the gear and flaps down.**

**I made the turn to the left and almost immediately felt a “bump/buffet”.**

**The “bump” was immediately followed by the left wing dipping sharply; the airplane “fell out of the sky”. It happened in 1 or 2 seconds.**

The left wing dragged across taxiway B8 and disintegrated all the way up to the fuselage.

The airplane slammed onto RWY 9L at B8 and came to rest on 9L.

Fuel was pouring out of the front tank, so I turned off the Master and Alternator switches and exited as quickly as possible.

After a few minutes, when it seemed there was not going to be a fire, I went back to the plane to get my cell phone so I could let someone know what had happened, and that I was alive.

A few minutes after that the EMT and Fire trucks came to the crash site.

Note: The entire flight, from takeoff to crash, lasted a little over 1 minute.

Summary:

- I over looked the right engine cover not being locked down.
  - I did not catch it on my final walk around.
  - I focused WAY TOO MUCH on the open engine cover and WAY TOO LITTLE on FLYING the AIRPLANE; MAINTAINING PROPER AIRSPEED, ATTITUDE, and ALTITUDE.
  - The result was classic stall/spin scenario too close to the ground.
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#### Requested Info:

- N708WC 700 airframe hours

#### In the past 2 years:

- I bought and trained in an RV-12 @ 20-30hrs with an instructor'
- I completed a week-long Initial Pilatus PC-12/45 Training Class (ground School Simulator).
- I completed a Sporty's IPC course and BFR course online.
- I completed a couple Wings courses; Rwy Safety and Weather.
- I have watched many Air Safety Institute Videos on You Tube.
- I was checked out and flew 10+ hrs in a Piper Arrow II to become familiar with retractable landing gear prior to going out to bring the Falco home.
- I had been working on a detailed IPC in the Falco.

Note: After flying the RV-12 for 8 months @130hrs, I sold it and bought the F.8L Falco.

- I went out to California and flew for 10hrs with the Owner/Builder/Pilot
- I flew the Falco back to Florida from California over a 5-day period.
- 19.5 hrs, @3300 miles and 7 stops; some weather related.

- I have accumulated @130 TACH Hrs; @160 airframe hours in the past 14 months in N708WC: a total of 260 TACH hrs in the past 2 years.

**Additional Info:**

- Hours in Make Model: 130 logged hrs
- Hours in last 90 days: 15.8 (July - Sept)

**Note: Condition Inspection and work out of town took away 3 weeks of flying in July 2023 – no flights during those 3 weeks.**

- Hours last 12 months – 83.1 (same note as above)
- Total Flight Hrs 1,780

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**Please let me know if you need anything else.**

**James W Strong**