

WILLIAM BRANDON STATEMENT FOR N35408 HARD LANDING INCIDENT

(18 AUG 2021)

On the morning of Saturday, September 18th , Joshua Heinig and I were practicing touch and go's in N35408 at Birchwood airport on runway 20R. There was more traffic than the previous times that we had been there, but we were managing well by extending out downwind leg and doing 360's for spacing as needed. On the previous few landings, Joshua had instructed me that I was pulling back on the controls to early and needed to wait longer to pull back. So, we made a plan that, on the next landing I would set up the landing but would continue with nose down attitude until he told me it was time to pull back. On this specific landing, we had extended our downwind further than we ever had to before. When the time to pull back came and he gave me the instruction, I pulled back on the controls too quickly and too hard. I think that I was metaly compensating for the fact that we were further into the landing. I realized my mistake almost immediately and Joshua vocalized it as well. After that happened, we both were actively placing input on the controls to level out and stay on the centerline. However, we were falling quickly and towards the right. Before we hit the ground, it seemed as if we leveled out well enough to avoid hitting the wing or tail. The landing itself, seemed similar to a few of the hard landings that I have accidentally done, except with a much more forceful impact. Immediately after we landed, Joshua asked if I was okay and took complete control of the aircraft. He taxied us to the runway/taxiway intersection, where we had to wait for a glider to be moved out of our path. Once the path was clear, Joshua taxied us to a spot near the hangar and shut off the engine. We both got out of the aircraft and caught our breath while we did a walkaround. He then asked me if I thought we hit the tail, and I responded no, to which he agreed. After not finding any initial damage, we both continued to do a more thorough look around, including Joshua putting downward pressure on the tail to raise the front of the aircraft so that I could look at the landing gears. After agreeing that we believed there was no significant damage, we got back into the aircraft and began the process of flying back to Elmendorf. Joshua completely flew the aircraft from the time he took controls after the hard landing to when we were parked at the Aero Club. After we walked inside, we had a brief discussion of what had happened. It seemed like he wanted to keep it short, and he just told me that I need to remember to use subtle control movements while landing and that he didn't want this to scare me away from continuing my training. He then dismissed me and told me he would schedule us to fly on the following Wednesday, the 22nd. At our brief meeting on Wednesday (our flight was cancelled), I learned that he reached out to individuals at the Aero Club after I left to inform them of the hard landing and that there could be potential damage.

Please let me know what else you need from me or if there is any questions on my statement.

Respectfully,

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