

Stephen Stein
Senior Aviation Accident Investigator
Aviation Safety - Western Pacific Region

Date: March 22, 2023

Subject: WPR23LA130 - Gordonville, Texas - Record of Conversation

Contact: Larry Lewis, pilot of accident airplane

Mr. Lewis stated that he was flying in a group of about 6 airplanes that departed from Wichita Valley Airport in a staggered formation. The destination airport, where the accident took place, was a grass airstrip and he was the last one in the group to land. He approached the runway with a slight quartering tailwind and kept his speed up while in a slight crab. When he came in over the trees the crosswind ceased and he aligned the airplane with the runway. The main landing gear touched down and he didn't feel the nose landing gear contact the ground. He observed a slight bounce and a "funny sound" that happened the same time as the main landing gear touched down. The airplane then slid, flipped over and came to rest.

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Date: January 2, 2024

Subject: WPR23LA130 - Gordonville, Texas - Record of Conversation

Contact: Adrian Buck, eyewitness

Ms. Buck stated that she had been a passenger in another airplane and witnessed the accident. According to her recount, the airplane approached the field normally, in a stabilized approach. During touchdown the main landing gear touched down first and the nose landing gear contacted the ground right after (the landing was "good" and "not hard"). The nose landing gear then went straight down and penetrated the ground. The airplane then flipped over.

The witness noted that the accident was a complete surprise considering the approach was normal.



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Date: January 2, 2024

Subject: WPR23LA130 - Gordonville, Texas - Record of Conversation

Contact: Blake Thorne, aircraft mechanic

Mr. Thorne stated that he was the mechanic who had most recently performed an annual inspection on the airplane and replaced the bushing on the scissor link in 2022. According to the mechanic, the scissor link is the only thing that holds the nose landing gear piston and cylinder to the nose strut (located up near the engine mount). If you disconnect the scissor link (torque link) on the nose landing gear the cylinder and fork will come out. Mr. Thorne stated that he did not observe any abnormalities when he replaced the bushing.

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Date: April 3, 2023

Subject: WPR23LA130 - Gordonville, Texas - Record of Conversation

Contact: Rodger Carr, passenger of accident airplane

Mr. Carr stated that he was a passenger in the accident airplane. During the landing attempt he felt the main landing gear touch down followed by the nose landing gear at which time he heard a "big bang." At this time the nose landing gear separated from the airplane, the airplane then slid about 30 ft and then flipped over and came to rest.

He noted that they were landing on runway 25 at the time and they were in a group of about 5-6 other airplanes that had come to the airport for lunch. The accident airplane was the last one to land in the group. Mr. Carr reported that the landing was smooth.

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Date: January 2, 2024

Subject: WPR23LA130 - Gordonville, Texas - Record of Conversation

Contact: Tyler Rennick, eyewitness

Mr. Rennick reported that he was an eyewitness to the accident. He observed the airplane landing with a tailwind after performing a go-around. During this attempt the airplane floated a little and then touched down on the main landing gear. As soon as he touched down the front strut "shot out" of the airplane. The nose bounced up just enough for the cylinder and piston to clear the strut and then the nose came down.

According to Mr. Rennick, the approach and landing were good. He remarked that the airplane had a good rate of descent during the landing and didn't come in on the nose.