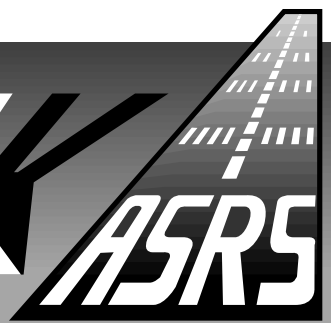


CALLBACK

From NASA's Aviation Safety Reporting System



Number 301

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SCARY TALES



Silhouetted against a rising moon, the old ASRS manor looms above the misty Mountain View moors. Within its high walls, down long,

narrow passages, sequestered scribes unravel the mysteries of aggravating anomalies, frightful weather, and the inexplicable workings of gremlins. Aside from occasional grumbles and groans, the work progresses in studious silence until... ominous clouds darken the full moon, the hall lights flicker and dim, and a tale so scary, so beyond the pale, evokes a chilling cry... "YIKES!"

Moved by ancient ritual, old buzzards gather in response to the alarm, chew over the report, and pick apart the culprit.

"How could they..."

"What were they thinking..."

Then an old timer who's seen and done it all says, "Yes, but I remember once when I was a youngster...dumbest thing I ever did...lucky I'm still alive...."

More true confessions follow before the old buzzards disperse.

Thank you, to the reporters who submitted these scary tales.

Your Input Keeps Everyone Safer! (YIKES!)

A Weighty Tail

It's one thing to shuffle around the attic dragging chains, but trying to get a C182 to levitate properly with a concrete weight attached is another story.

■ *I was in the middle of preflighting and while at the tail of the aircraft the passenger arrived. I had to let him in the gate and then returned to the preflight, beginning where I left off at the tail.... I did not see the tail tied down to a black tire filled with concrete and the anchor rope was dark gray and nearly invisible in the available light. I had looked underneath the elevators but missed the tie down rope. This was exactly where I had been interrupted.*

I noted a bit more resistance than usual when beginning to taxi. I verified the chocks were out of the way and added a bit more power and the aircraft rolled relatively easily. There was a headwind on the runway and the tower was not operational when we took off headed north. Upon lifting off there were some rather significant "bumps" that felt like turbulence. The passenger remarked that it was "bouncier" than usual. Once airborne, however, the aircraft

developed an oscillation that was impossible to trim out. The mission was to...perform some survey work. The flight proceeded, but with continuous oscillations. Control was not difficult and I trimmed it up...and flew the mission at 80 mph without any other difficulties. The oscillations seemed to regular to be related to the wind. Everything else seemed fine.

We returned for landing and... just above the flare the aircraft began pitching more noticeably.... At that moment the aircraft suddenly dropped onto the tarmac with a rather hard landing. Nothing was damaged.

I taxied back to the tie down space and upon exiting the aircraft, noted a tie down rope hanging from the tail tie down ring. The tire that had been there was missing. I searched the runway and discovered the tire about two-thirds of the way down the runway, along with a frayed piece of tie down rope.

Obviously, I had taken off with a 100-150 pound cement-filled tire attached to the rearmost tie down ring.

Things That Go Bump in the Night

Ever have one of those flights that seemed like a bad dream? Either this PA 28 was trimmed just right, or the pilot took sleepwalking to a whole new level.

■ *I took off sometime after midnight. I noted half-full tanks during my preflight. I flew to [another field], did four touch and goes, flew around the local area, and then headed for [a second field]. Enroute, I fell asleep and ran the left tank out of fuel. I landed in a cotton field. My only memory of the incident was impacting the ground in the field.*

This incident was caused by a poor decision to fly late at night without proper rest after a long day at work.

Lost, Alone, and in the Dark

This report to ASRS from a low-time, light aircraft pilot emphasizes the importance of asking for assistance as soon as it is necessary. A request for help from Air Traffic Control can prevent a small problem from growing into a scary scenario.

■ *I preflighted the plane for a return flight to [another airport in Wisconsin]. The lighting on the instrument panel seemed faint, but the airport ramp was well lit. I adjusted the rheostat on the panel and departed. Once aloft, I could not easily read the instruments. Relying only on the compass, I became lost. I could not read the clock and lost track of time. After searching for an airport to put the plane down, I saw one with a runway open. I saw a plane approaching and, maintaining a safe distance, followed it in and landed. I took the first taxiway off the runway and shut down. I had not declared an emergency and was not in contact with the tower. It was O'Hare.*

ASRS Recently Issued Alerts On...

L-1011 loss of pitch trim control
B737-800/900 aural alert volume control
Eastern U.S. airport SID obstacle clearance
Southern U.S. ARTCC radio frequency problem
Southern U.S. airport runway marking discrepancy

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September 2004 Report Intake

Air Carrier / Air Taxi Pilots	2197
General Aviation Pilots	750
Controllers	48
Cabin/Mechanics/Military/Other	152
TOTAL	3147

Copies of the ASRS reports that generated the "Recently Issued Alerts" can be obtained by writing to the NASA Aviation Safety Reporting System or by emailing a request to: asrs-alerts@lists.arc.nasa.gov



Although you may be conscientious in your approach to flying, you cannot assume that everyone else will be as professional. These scary encounters point out the need to keep an eye out for the “other guy.”

Three’s a Crowd

It’s bad enough dealing with one “other guy,” let alone two. This flight crew had the misfortune to be confronted with a double dose of dubious decisions.

■ *We entered the traffic pattern on the downwind having made position reports...on the Common Traffic Advisory Frequency (CTAF). On the TCASII we observed an airplane at our eight o’clock position which maintained very close proximity.... On short final for Runway 27, we received a TCAS traffic warning from this same aircraft but we decided that landing would be the safest course of action since the runway was clear.... After announcing our position on short final we proceeded to land. Upon announcing our back taxi to the ramp, and while still in a 180-degree turn, we realized that a Cessna had landed directly behind us, while we were still on the runway. Even more alarming was the transmission over CTAF that a Beechcraft was on short final to land. The pilot instructed us to remain at the end of the runway so that he could land. I told him that he should not land, that there was a Cessna in the middle of the runway already, and that it was a very unsafe situation. We made it very clear that two planes were on the runway, and that his failure to go around would be [unsafe]. The Beechcraft pilot refused to agree and landed while we prepared to exit the runway into the adjacent gravel area, if necessary. Yikes! All of these aircraft then proceeded to back taxi to the ramp without further incident..*

Opposing Twins

It appears that the pilot who submitted this report used the required lighting and made the appropriate radio transmissions before taking the runway. The “other guy” had opposite ideas.

■ *We had just landed on our first leg of a multi-engine/commercial training cross-country. We taxied back to the active runway making all of the appropriate radio calls.... After applying full power and reaching about 30 knots, we saw a light twin taking off in the opposite direction with no lights on except a red anti-collision light, which from the distance had been mistaken for an obstacle light. We throttled to idle and applied full brakes. The opposite direction traffic passed overhead by approximately 20 feet.*

As with pilots, controllers’ abilities improve with experience. In this incident there may have been controller training in progress that eventually required a supervisor to take over. However, as the reporter pointed out, everyone involved probably made assumptions and certainly each contributed factors that collectively led to a very close call.

■ *... There was a piston twin in front of me in the runway area. I reported ready in sequence to the tower. I read back instructions to hold short. Tower advised that a King Air was at seven miles inbound on the ILS.... The twin was cleared to takeoff and I was immediately cleared to “position and hold.” I waited at the hold line because the twin did not take off immediately. Instead, he hesitated and then began to move down the runway. I moved into position on the runway as he moved out of the way. [The runway] has about a 1,000 foot displaced threshold. I was in position at the end and could see pretty well down the runway.... I waited for takeoff clearance.... I was beginning to wonder where the King Air was.... It appeared that the Tower was working the departures and arrivals pretty tightly. As the seconds ticked by, I became concerned. I didn’t feel like I would be in actual danger if the King Air came in because of the displaced threshold, but I didn’t like being on the runway and not knowing where he was. I decided to ask the controller if he wanted me off the runway, but just then I was given takeoff clearance.... I assumed that the King Air must not be as close as I had feared or they wouldn’t be clearing me to takeoff. I...entered IMC very soon after rotation.... Then I heard the King Air pilot report that he was “on the missed.” He said, “We can’t see a thing.” I was shocked to hear this. I had just lifted off and my initial climb rate was more than 1,100 feet per minute. Now I had a King Air, theoretically climbing out of 250 feet AGL right behind me.... I maintained runway heading, staying where the controllers expected me to be.... I heard two partial transmissions.... The controller didn’t seem to know what to say or do in response to the developing situation.... There was a few seconds of silence then transmissions from what sounded like a different person, “King Air XXX, turn right immediately; heading 330”.... Then I was given an immediate left turn.... I leveled off (probably an instinctive “duck”), then I heard the sound and felt the vibration. Turboprop engines - somewhere very close. The sound faded and I resumed my climb. I broke through the overcast into the clear.... I never saw the King Air:*

I think everyone had the mindset that the King Air was landing. I know I was thinking that way and I suspect that the controller was as well. I think the spacing between my aircraft and the King Air was managed as if we were in VMC.... I think we all got into the situation because things took a little longer than expected. The twin was slow to depart. My takeoff clearance didn’t come immediately. Maybe the King Air’s right turn on the missed approach didn’t start immediately.

YIKES!

