

No: 4/92

Ref: EW/G91/12/05

Category: 1c

Aircraft Type and Registration: Boeing B75N1 Stearman, G-ELAN
No & Type of Engines: 1 Continental W-670-6A piston engine
Year of Manufacture: 1943
Date & Time (UTC): 27 December 1991 at 1445 hrs
Location: Near Cirencester, Gloucestershire
Type of Flight: Private
Persons on Board: Crew - 1 Passengers - 1
Injuries: Crew - None Passengers - None
Nature of Damage: Damage to landing gear, propeller and engine
Commander's Licence: Private Pilot's Licence
Commander's Age: 37 years
Commander's Flying Experience: 460 hours (of which 300 were on type)
Information Source: Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot

Approximately 10 minutes after taking off for a local flight, severe vibration was experienced such that the pilot reported that he had difficulty in holding the control column. After selecting a field in which to land the aircraft, the pilot carried out his emergency drills and shut down the engine. A 'Mayday' call was transmitted to RAF Brize Norton, but it later transpired that this had not been heard, probably due to a simultaneous transmission from another aircraft. Once established on a final glide-approach to the field, the pilot realised that the aircraft was likely to hit a stone wall and attempted to 'stretch' the glide. However, the aircraft's landing gear struck the four feet high wall and was torn off, but the aircraft continued and 'landed' on its underside in the field. There was no fire, and the pilot and passenger were able to evacuate the aircraft unaided.

Subsequent examination of the aircraft by maintenance personnel revealed a quantity of metal swarf in the oil filter, the nature of which was consistent with that which would be expected from a bearing failure within the engine. The engine has since been shipped to a specialist repair/overhaul agency in the USA and a detailed report on its findings will be available in due course. The engine was recorded as having a total time of 302.30 hours at the time of the accident.

The last scheduled maintenance carried out on the aircraft, which was certificated in the Private Category, was an Annual check on 21 August 1991, some 20 flying hours before the accident.