

ACCIDENT

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| Aircraft Type and Registration: | Pitts S-2A Special, G-ODDS | |
| No & type of Engines: | 1 Lycoming AEIO-360-A1E piston engine | |
| Year of Manufacture: | 1980 | |
| Date & Time (UTC): | 1 August 2006 at 1212 hrs | |
| Location: | White Waltham Airfield, Maidenhead, Berkshire | |
| Type of Flight: | Training | |
| Persons on Board: | Crew - 2 | Passengers - None |
| Injuries: | Crew - None | Passengers - N/A |
| Nature of Damage: | Propeller, left upper and lower wings and engine shockloaded | |
| Commander's Licence: | Airline Transport Pilot's Licence | |
| Commander's Age: | 67 years | |
| Commander's Flying Experience: | 20,393 hours (of which 125 were on type) Last 90 days - 112 hours Last 28 days - 47 hours | |
| Information Source: | Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot | |

Synopsis

Whilst taxiing to the fuel pumps, after an uneventful flight, the Pitts Special collided with a parked and unoccupied Cessna 150.

Background information

The main aircraft parking area at White Waltham consists of three numbered rows on the grass orientated north-east/south-west. Each row has a securing cable running the length of it to a marker board at the beginning of it. Line One, the most southerly line, extends out into the airfield more than Lines Two and Three by approximately 70 m. At the time of the accident there was a Cessna 150 parked at the end of Line One with a gap of 65 m between it and the next aircraft. There was no marker board at the beginning of this line.

History of the flight

The instructor, who was in the rear of the aircraft, reported that he was taxiing the tail-wheeled aircraft to the fuelling pumps after an uneventful aerobatic instructional sortie. Whilst taxiing he was discussing the flight with the student, who was in the front. As the aircraft passed the first line of parked aircraft, Line Three, the student suddenly stopped talking and the instructor noticed her head was lowered; the instructor realised that she was feeling nauseous.

After the aircraft had passed past the second line of parked aircraft, Line Two, the instructor was looking to the right to see that he was clear of the Line Two marker board and to see if the student was alright. He was also looking to see which side of the fuel pumps was clear

for his aircraft. He was just about to stop the aircraft to see if the student needed any assistance when she started talking again and said she was feeling better. At this moment the aircraft was approaching the third line of aircraft, Line One.

The instructor intended to turn slightly right to taxi through the gap between the main line of parked aircraft and the Cessna 150 that was on the end of Line One. At this point he was predominately looking to the right in order to see the aircraft on his right and his route to the pumps. Almost immediately the Pitts Special struck the Cessna 150 parked at the end of Line One.

Having shut down the engine the instructor and student vacated the aircraft uninjured. The airfield fire tender and engineers were quickly in attendance to offer assistance.

Damage assessment

The repair agency reported that the following damage was sustained as a result of this accident. The Pitts Special

sustained damage to its propeller, the left interplane strut, the left upper and lower wings, and the pitot head. The engine was shock-loaded when the propeller struck the wing. The Cessna 150 sustained damage to the leading edge of its left wing. Its propeller was bent during the collision and so its engine was also shock-loaded.

Discussion

In an open and frank report the instructor attributed the accident to a combination of circumstances. These include: being distracted by the student feeling unwell, being slightly complacent with the taxi route, inadequate lookout to the front and left, and Line One being longer than the other lines. He added that because the pilot's forward view in the Pitts Special is much obstructed, keeping a good lookout by weaving a tail-wheeled aircraft's nose was the main learning point.

Since this accident the marker board at the beginning of Line One has been replaced.