ACCIDENT

Aircraft Type and Registration:	North American/Aero Classics P-51 Mustang, N51BS
No & Type of Engines:	1 PKRD-ROLL V1650 series
Year of Manufacture:	1958 (Serial no: 44-73822)
Date & Time (UTC):	25 May 2018 at 1340 hrs
Location:	Woodchurch Airfield, Kent
Type of Flight:	Private
Persons on Board:	Crew - 1 Passengers - None
Injuries:	Crew - None Passengers - N/A
Nature of Damage:	Left gear leg detached, and damage to propeller, wing, flap and tail wheel
Commander's Licence:	Private Pilot's Licence
Commander's Age:	54 years
Commander's Flying Experience:	625 hours (of which 4 were on type) Last 90 days - 40 hours Last 28 days - 40 hours
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot

The pilot reported that he was experienced in operating historic military aircraft and had completed P-51 training one year before the accident. He explained that N51BS was heavier than other P-51s he had flown because it had been restored to its original configuration, which included heavier materials and inert weaponry.

The accident occurred during takeoff from Woodchurch Airfield. The runway was 750 m long and the pilot reported that its grass surface had become soft due to rain. He commented that he did not apply full power immediately to avoid causing the aircraft to roll in the opposite direction to propeller rotation. As the aircraft moved, its wheels sank into the ground and it did not reach the desired speed for takeoff. At the end of the runway the pilot turned the aircraft to avoid a ditch. It struck a fence and came to rest approximately 180 m beyond the end of the runway.

The pilot stated that because he had successfully operated a different P-51 from another grass strip of similar dimensions to Woodchurch he did not perform a performance calculation. He reflected that he had not experienced the ground becoming as soft as it was on this occasion, and he had not considered the higher weight of N51BS.