

ACCIDENT

Aircraft Type and Registration:	Gulfstream Commander 840 Model 690C, N51WF	
No & Type of Engines:	2	Garrett 331 turboprop engines
Year of Manufacture:	1981	
Date & Time (UTC):	23 January 2007 at 1057 hrs	
Location:	Fairoaks Airport, Surrey	
Type of Flight:	Private	
Persons on Board:	Crew - 2	Passengers - None
Injuries:	Crew - None	Passengers - N/A
Nature of Damage:	Right engine shock-loaded and propeller blades damaged	
Commander's Licence:	FAA Private Pilot's Certificate	
Commander's Age:	74 years	
Commander's Flying Experience:	1,671 hours (of which 381 were on type) Last 90 days - 25 hours Last 28 days - 6 hours	
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot	

Synopsis

While taxiing through the apron, which had work in progress, the aircraft's right propeller struck a hazard warning cone and a concrete block.

History of the flight

The pilot landed on Runway 06 at Fairoaks Airport where the weather was good. He vacated the runway and taxied to the north along Taxiway C towards the apron. As he approached the apron the pilot noticed a large crane to his left and some ground obstruction cones to his right. He reported that he stopped the aircraft before reaching the crane and was then aware of someone in a yellow jacket, whom he presumed was a marshaller, appearing ahead of him. The pilot taxied

N51WF forward watching that he had clearance from the crane and assuming that the 'marshaller' would ensure that the aircraft was clear of the warning cones on the right side. As N51WF moved forward, the pilot heard a noise, which he thought may have been the right engine contacting an obstruction. He shut down both engines and found that the right propeller had contacted a cone and a concrete block.

Discussion with the 'marshaller' revealed that he was working with the crane and had come out purely because he was worried that the aircraft was going to contact the crane.

The pilot, who confirmed that he had previously operated N51WF into Fairoaks but always using Runway 24, subsequently commented that he should have been warned by the ‘Tower’ and that signs should have been put up on the taxiway to indicate that the condition of the taxiway and ramp were a danger to aircraft.

ATC information

Fairoaks Airport operates a Flight Information Service (FIS), which is provided at aerodromes without an air traffic control unit but where the provision of an air traffic service is desirable. Civil Air Publication (CAP) 427 includes the following in the list of responsibilities of a Flight Information Service Officer (FISO):

‘Issuing instructions and information to aircraft moving on the manoeuvring area to assist pilots in preventing collisions between aircraft and vehicles and obstructions on the manoeuvring area, or between aircraft moving on the apron.’

The FISO, who had previously seen the aircraft operating at Fairoaks, confirmed that it landed on Runway 06 but he did not recall the pilot calling “Finals” prior to landing or “Vacated” after clearing the runway. He watched the aircraft taxi quickly along Taxiway C towards the apron.

The crane and rubble, associated with the Work in Progress (WIP) on the apron area were marked by frangible cones. The FISO was aware of the position of the crane but not of the WIP across the taxiway from the crane which significantly narrowed the taxiing channel. He stated that had he been aware of this WIP, he would have transmitted a warning to the aircraft.

The UK Aeronautical Information Package (AIP) includes the following warnings in the entry for Fairoaks Airport:

‘Pilots are to exercise extreme caution when taxiing through the apron/ parking areas due to reduced wingtip clearances. Pilots should satisfy themselves that they have adequate wingtip clearances whilst taxiing.’

This warning is also included within other aviation publications such as ‘Pooleys Flight Guide’. The CAA’s Safety Sense Leaflet No 6d entitled ‘*Aerodrome Sense*’ includes the following information for pilots after landing:

‘Look for any marshaller’s signals, but remember you are still responsible for your aircraft’s safety.’

Discussion

The pilot was familiar with the airport and had responsibility for the safety of his aircraft. While he thought that the crane operator was a ‘marshaller’, who was guiding him through the area of the marked obstacles, the pilot was ultimately responsible for ensuring that he had sufficient clearance.

The WIP was clearly marked and appropriate warnings were contained within aviation publications. Nevertheless, the FISO considered that the aircraft was taxiing quickly and he had not heard any R/T calls from it on the ground. It would have been prudent for him to transmit an additional warning about the WIP as the aircraft taxied towards the affected area.