

GA1331

Posted on 06.12.2022 by Steve Forward

Category: [General Aviation](#)

Report TitleAwareness

Initial Report

On this particular day I was flying for the first time to an airfield some distance away, I had spent many hours viewing google maps of the site, and rehearsing different approaches and scenarios on arrival. I had specifically waited for a good VFR day. The site was by its own admission difficult to find with the added risk of gliders very nearby, and controlled airspace to the South.

I had got my aircraft out, refuelled it, and did my checks. Whilst I was doing this the airfield was coming to life, other aircraft being pulled out and started. I had done my start checks, and asked and got airfield information, I had then taxied to the runway intersection and held. My vision throughout the taxi to my left was restricted by tall corn or wheat growing. Another aircraft was on the other side of the intersection doing its pre-flight checks. At this point I decided to cross the active runway to also carry out my pre-flight checks, the other aircraft seemed to have finished its checks and had turned to come onto the active runway, though not on it.

From memory I think I called crossing the active runway. Two thirds of the way across, the shadow of ANOTHER aircraft taking off passed over me, which I was completely unaware of. I spoke briefly to the other aircraft and offered my apologies also speaking to him by telephone later that week.

I have looked carefully at the chain of events, and tried to find the point at which this near disaster could have been averted. My mind was very much focused on the long flight, to an unknown airfield, hence an early take off. My awareness of other aircraft was not clear, I had seen another aircraft taxi past me, whilst doing my own checks and had seen the same one I believed on the other side of the active runway. At the point of crossing the intersection I assumed there was only one aircraft ahead of me, I did not hear or did not receive a transmission of taking off from the other aircraft. I did not clear to my left before crossing the runway.

There is no doubt in my mind that the fault in this near miss is all mine. In retrospect, a visual cue of another aircraft on the active runway would have stopped me crossing, but the lack of view in itself should have made me stop and CHECK. My unknown cognitive assumption being the aircraft directly to my front was the only one ahead of me. In order, the chain of events leading up to this near miss was: 1) lots of focus on the flight itself, 2) anxious to get going, 3) missed radio calls? 4) not checking the active is clear, 5) being misled by your own visual cues.

Comment

The reporter has identified the key lessons from this event, of which it seems that task-focus was the primary reason for not assimilating all the other cues. But the main lesson is that you must always visually check that a runway is clear in both directions before entering or crossing because radio calls can easily be missed (and some aircraft operate non-radio anyway) and so you can't rely on thinking you have a good mental picture about where the other aircraft might be on the ground or in the circuit. In this case the tall crops might have initially obscured the view but there would likely have been opportunities to check the runway as it was approached.

Key Issues

Dirty Dozen Human Factors

The following 'Dirty Dozen' Human Factors elements were a key part of the CHIRP discussions about this report and are intended to provide food for thought when considering aspects that might be pertinent in similar circumstances.

Pressure – self-induced pressure to complete the early take-off.

Distraction – task-focus on the flight's challenges rather than the task at hand.

Awareness – did not assimilate that another aircraft was taking-off on the runway.

Complacency – did not fully ensure a clear runway before crossing.



