



# National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Final Report

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<b>Location:</b>	Maricopa, CA	<b>Accident Number:</b>	SEA08LA070
<b>Date &amp; Time:</b>	02/02/2008, 1000 PST	<b>Registration:</b>	N96KR
<b>Aircraft:</b>	KIDD CHRIS HARMON ROC	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Destroyed
<b>Defining Event:</b>	Collision with terr/obj (non-CFIT)	<b>Injuries:</b>	1 Fatal
<b>Flight Conducted Under:</b>	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

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## Analysis

The pilot departed a location where visual meteorological conditions existed, and was attempting to fly to another location that was also reporting visual meteorological conditions. During the flight, the pilot entered an area of hilly terrain that was covered by a low overcast ceiling of variable height. While maneuvering through that area in winds that were reportedly gusting to 10 miles per hour, the airplane impacted the terrain. No evidence was found of any anomaly or malfunction of the airframe, flight controls, or engine.

## Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The pilot's failure to maintain an adequate terrain clearance altitude while maneuvering in mountainous, hilly terrain. Contributing to the accident were hilly terrain, a low ceiling and gusty winds.

## Findings

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<b>Aircraft</b>	Altitude - Not attained/maintained (Cause)
<b>Environmental issues</b>	Mountainous/hilly terrain - Not specified (Factor) Gusts - Effect on operation (Factor) Low ceiling - Effect on operation (Factor)

## Factual Information

On February 2, 2008, about 1000 Pacific standard time, an experimental Kidd Harmon Rocket, N96KR, impacted the hilly terrain about 10 miles south of Maricopa, California. The private pilot, who was the sole occupant of the airplane, was killed, and the airplane, which was owned and operated by the pilot, was destroyed. The pilot of the 14 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) part 91 personal pleasure flight departed a private airstrip near Taft, California, around 0930. According to a family member, he was en route to the area around New Cuyama, California. No flight plan had been filed. There was no report of an ELT activation.

At the time the pilot departed Taft, there were visual meteorological conditions (VMC), with 10 miles visibility, in both Taft and New Cuyama. But witnesses who lived in the area reported that there were low ceilings of variable heights and winds gusting to about 10 miles per hour in the hills between the two locations. Reportedly, although the visibility below the clouds was good, the ceiling was touching the top of the hills in many places throughout the area.

It is believed that the pilot attempted to follow State Highway 33 through the narrow valley that runs northeast to southwest through the aforementioned hills. While the pilot was maneuvering in that area, the airplane impacted the terrain while traveling in a northwesterly direction. According to the FAA Inspector who responded to the scene, the airplane hit "very hard" in a nose-down attitude, and traveled about 150 feet before coming to rest. The impact created a three-foot-deep crater, and tore the engine from the airframe.

When the pilot did not show up at his destination on the day of his departure, his family reported him missing, and a search was initiated. The wreckage was eventually spotted from the air four days after the accident.

The airplane was relocated to the facilities of Aircraft Recovery Services, where it underwent an FAA directed teardown inspection. That inspection did not reveal any evidence of a pre-impact anomaly or malfunction of the airframe, flight controls, or engine components.

The FAA's Forensic Toxicology Research Team performed a toxicological examination on specimens taken from the pilot. That examination was negative for screened drugs and consumed ethanol. Due to the elapsed time between the accident and the discovery of the wreckage, the standard tests for carbon monoxide and cyanide were not performed.

The Kern County Coroner performed an autopsy on the pilot, and the cause of death was determined to be from blunt force injuries, with the manner of death being listed as accidental.

## History of Flight

Maneuvering-low-alt flying

Collision with terr/obj (non-CFIT) (Defining event)

## Pilot Information

<b>Certificate:</b>	Private	<b>Age:</b>	45, Male
<b>Airplane Rating(s):</b>	Single-engine Land	<b>Seat Occupied:</b>	Front
<b>Other Aircraft Rating(s):</b>	None	<b>Restraint Used:</b>	Seatbelt, Shoulder harness
<b>Instrument Rating(s):</b>	None	<b>Second Pilot Present:</b>	No
<b>Instructor Rating(s):</b>	None	<b>Toxicology Performed:</b>	Yes
<b>Medical Certification:</b>	Class 3 Without Waivers/Limitations	<b>Last Medical Exam:</b>	08/17/2006
<b>Occupational Pilot:</b>	No	<b>Last Flight Review or Equivalent:</b>	
<b>Flight Time:</b>	2600 hours (Total, all aircraft)		

## Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

<b>Aircraft Manufacturer:</b>	KIDD CHRIS	<b>Registration:</b>	N96KR
<b>Model/Series:</b>	HARMON ROC	<b>Aircraft Category:</b>	Airplane
<b>Year of Manufacture:</b>		<b>Amateur Built:</b>	Yes
<b>Airworthiness Certificate:</b>	Experimental	<b>Serial Number:</b>	2001
<b>Landing Gear Type:</b>	Tailwheel	<b>Seats:</b>	2
<b>Date/Type of Last Inspection:</b>		<b>Certified Max Gross Wt.:</b>	1550 lbs
<b>Time Since Last Inspection:</b>		<b>Engines:</b>	1 Reciprocating
<b>Airframe Total Time:</b>		<b>Engine Manufacturer:</b>	LYCOMING
<b>ELT:</b>	Installed, not activated	<b>Engine Model/Series:</b>	IO-540
<b>Registered Owner:</b>	KIDD CHRIS	<b>Rated Power:</b>	300 hp
<b>Operator:</b>	KIDD CHRIS	<b>Air Carrier Operating Certificate:</b>	None

## Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Observation Facility, Elevation:		Observation Time:	
Distance from Accident Site:		Condition of Light:	Day
Direction from Accident Site:		Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual Conditions
Lowest Cloud Condition:		Temperature/Dew Point:	10° C
Lowest Ceiling:	Overcast	Visibility	10 Miles
Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:	/ 10 knots, Variable	Visibility (RVR):	
Altimeter Setting:		Visibility (RVV):	
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Taft, CA (L17)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	New Cuyama, CA (L88)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	0930 PST	Type of Airspace:	

## Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Fatal	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Passenger Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 Fatal		

## Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Orrin K Anderson	Adopted Date:	12/28/2008
Additional Participating Persons:	Harlow Vorhees; Federal Aviation Administration; Fresno, CA		
Publish Date:	12/28/2008		
Investigation Docket:	NTSB accident and incident dockets serve as permanent archival information for the NTSB's investigations. Dockets released prior to June 1, 2009 are publicly available from the NTSB's Record Management Division at <a href="mailto:pubinq@ntsb.gov">pubinq@ntsb.gov</a> , or at 800-877-6799. Dockets released after this date are available at <a href="http://dms.nts.gov/pubdms/">http://dms.nts.gov/pubdms/</a> .		

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