



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Data Summary

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|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|------------|
| Location: | Elephant Butte, NM | Accident Number: | CEN11FA312 |
| Date & Time: | 05/01/2011, 1215 MDT | Registration: | N89MM |
| Aircraft: | COMBS EARL W KITFOX SPEEDSTER | Injuries: | 1 Fatal |
| Flight Conducted Under: | Part 91: General Aviation - Personal | | |

Analysis

The airplane was on a local flight from a nearby airport. Two witnesses, who were driving north on an interstate highway, said the airplane was flying south about 1,000 feet above the ground when it pitched upward, rolled to the right, and then spiraled toward the ground. The witnesses said that they did not see any fire or smoke before they lost sight of the airplane. However, they subsequently saw a plume of smoke rising from behind a hill. A postaccident examination of the airplane wreckage showed that the airplane impacted the terrain in a right bank, slightly nose low attitude, then spun around to the left. A postimpact fire consumed most of the airplane structure. An examination of the wreckage did not reveal any preimpact anomalies that would have precluded normal operation of the airplane. A rod end for a push-pull tube between the flap handle and the flaperon mixer unit was found failed in overload at the outer two threads. Although this finding indicates potential problems with the construction and/or maintenance of the airplane, there is no indication that it contributed to the accident. Forensic toxicology testing of the pilot's liver and kidney detected Diphenhydramine; however, the level of Diphenhydramine was not substantive enough to be determined and its presence most likely did not induce impairment.

Flight Events

Enroute - Loss of engine power (total)
Emergency descent - Loss of engine power (total)
Emergency descent - Controlled flight into terr/obj (CFIT)

Probable Cause

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The pilot's loss of control of the airplane for reasons that could not be determined because postaccident examination of the airplane did not reveal any anomalies that would have precluded normal operation.

Findings

Personnel issues-Action/decision-Action-Incorrect action performance-Pilot - C
Personnel issues-Task performance-Inspection-Scheduled/routine inspection-Owner/builder
Personnel issues-Task performance-Use of equip/info-Aircraft control-Pilot - C

Pilot Information

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|----------------------------------|--|------------------------------|---|
| Certificate: | Flight Instructor; Commercial | Age: | 79 |
| Airplane Rating(s): | Multi-engine Land; Single-engine Land; Single-engine Sea | Instrument Rating(s): | Airplane |
| Other Aircraft Rating(s): | None | Instructor Rating(s): | Airplane Single-engine; Instrument Airplane |
| Flight Time: | | | |

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

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|---|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| Aircraft Manufacturer: | COMBS EARL W | Registration: | N89MM |
| Model/Series: | KITFOX SPEEDSTER | Engines: | 1 Reciprocating |
| Operator: | WOODSUM RICHARD P | Engine Manufacturer: | ROTAX |
| Air Carrier Operating Certificate: | None | Engine Model/Series: | 912UL |
| Flight Conducted Under: | Part 91: General Aviation - Personal | | |

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

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|---|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Observation Facility, Elevation: | TCS, 4853 ft msl | Weather Information Source: | Weather Observation Facility |
| Conditions at Accident Site: | Visual Conditions | Lowest Ceiling: | None |
| Condition of Light: | Day | Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction: | 4 knots, 250° |
| Temperature: | 14°C / -12°C | Visibility: | 10 Miles |
| Precipitation and Obscuration: | No Obscuration; No Precipitation | | |
| Departure Point: | Truth or Conseq, NM (TCS) | Destination: | Truth or Conseq, NM (TCS) |

Airport Information

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|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|--|
| Airport: | Truth or Consequences Muni (TCS) | Runway Surface Type: | |
| Runway Used: | N/A | Runway Surface Condition: | |
| Runway Length/Width: | | | |

Wreckage and Impact Information

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

Administrative Information

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|--------------------------------------|---|----------------------|------------|
| Investigator In Charge (IIC): | Timothy LeBaron | Adopted Date: | 01/22/2013 |
| Investigation Docket: | http://dms.nts.gov/pubdms/search/dockList.cfm?mKey=78999 | | |

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), established in 1967, is an independent federal agency mandated by Congress through the Independent Safety Board Act of 1974 to investigate transportation accidents, determine the probable causes of the accidents, issue safety recommendations, study transportation safety issues, and evaluate the safety effectiveness of government

agencies involved in transportation. The NTSB makes public its actions and decisions through accident reports, safety studies, special investigation reports, safety recommendations, and statistical reviews.

The Independent Safety Board Act, as codified at 49 U.S.C. Section 1154(b), precludes the admission into evidence or use of any part of an NTSB report related to an incident or accident in a civil action for damages resulting from a matter mentioned in the report.