



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Data Summary

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|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|------------|
| Location: | Kylertown, PA | Accident Number: | ERA16LA010 |
| Date & Time: | 10/12/2015, 1835 EDT | Registration: | N176FB |
| Aircraft: | MURRAY BLAIR L FREE BIRD CLASSIC | Injuries: | 1 Fatal |
| Flight Conducted Under: | Part 91: General Aviation - Personal | | |

Analysis

The private pilot/owner had recently completed the experimental, amateur-built airplane and was conducting the first test flight. The pilot had completed two circuits around his private airstrip before witnesses saw the airplane approaching to land. While on final approach about 50-100 ft above the ground, the airplane suddenly descended and impacted terrain. Of the three witnesses who saw the accident, two stated that the airplane nosed over to ground contact, and one stated that the left wing dropped before the airplane nosed over. Two other individuals heard the engine "rev up" before impact but did not observe the accident. The airplane impacted terrain short of the runway in a nearly vertical, nose-down attitude and sustained extensive damage to the engine, fuselage, wings, and empennage. The tail of the airplane was twisted and bent forward over the fuselage, and there did not appear to be any forward momentum of the airplane at impact, consistent with an aerodynamic stall/spin. The witness accounts of the airplane's nose or wing dropping were also consistent with entry into a stall/spin. Given that the accident flight was the pilot's first flight in the airplane, he was likely unfamiliar with its flight characteristics, and, during the approach for landing, the pilot allowed the airspeed to decay. The airplane subsequently exceeded its critical angle of attack and entered an aerodynamic stall/spin.

Flight Events

Approach-VFR pattern final - Loss of control in flight
Uncontrolled descent - Collision with terr/obj (non-CFIT)

Probable Cause

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be:

The pilot's failure to maintain sufficient airspeed during approach for landing, which resulted in an inadvertent aerodynamic stall/spin. Contributing to the accident was the pilot's lack of flight experience in the accident airplane make and model.

Findings

Aircraft-Aircraft oper/perf/capability-Performance/control parameters-Airspeed-Not attained/maintained - C

Aircraft-Aircraft oper/perf/capability-Performance/control parameters-Angle of attack-Not attained/maintained - C

Personnel issues-Task performance-Use of equip/info-Aircraft control-Pilot - C

Pilot Information

| | | | |
|----------------------------------|---|------------------------------|------|
| Certificate: | Private | Age: | 83 |
| Airplane Rating(s): | Single-engine Land | Instrument Rating(s): | None |
| Other Aircraft Rating(s): | None | Instructor Rating(s): | None |
| Flight Time: | (Estimated) 682 hours (Total, all aircraft), 1 hours (Total, this make and model) | | |

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

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|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| Aircraft Make: | MURRAY BLAIR L | Registration: | N176FB |
| Model/Series: | FREE BIRD CLASSIC Lite Sport | Engines: | 1 Reciprocating |
| Operator: | On file | Engine Manufacturer: | Hirth |
| Operating Certificate(s) Held: | None | Engine Model/Series: | 3203 |
| Flight Conducted Under: | Part 91: General Aviation - Personal | | |

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

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|---|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Conditions at Accident Site: | Visual Conditions | Condition of Light: | Day |
| Observation Facility, Elevation: | FIG, 1516 ft msl | Weather Information Source: | Weather Observation Facility |
| Lowest Ceiling: | | Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction: | 5 knots / , Variable |
| Temperature: | 18°C | Visibility | 10 Miles |
| Precipitation and Obscuration: | No Obscuration; No Precipitation | | |
| Departure Point: | Kylertown, PA (NONE) | Destination: | Kylertown, PA (NONE) |

Airport Information

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|-----------------------------|----------------|----------------------------------|-----|
| Airport: | Private (NONE) | Runway Surface Type: | N/A |
| Runway Used: | N/A | Runway Surface Condition: | Dry |
| Runway Length/Width: | | | |

Wreckage and Impact Information

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|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|-----------|
| Crew Injuries: | 1 Fatal | Aircraft Damage: | Destroyed |
| Passenger Injuries: | N/A | Aircraft Fire: | None |
| Ground Injuries: | N/A | Aircraft Explosion: | None |
| Latitude, Longitude: | 41.051944, -78.409167 (est) | | |

Administrative Information

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|-------------------------------|---|---------------|------------|
| Investigator In Charge (IIC): | Leah D Read | Adopted Date: | 05/01/2017 |
| Note: | The NTSB did not travel to the scene of this accident. | | |
| Investigation Docket: | http://dms.nts.gov/pubdms/search/dockList.cfm?mKey=92157 | | |

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.