



CASE FINDINGS

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The accident occurred on January 19, 2021. Due to agency travel restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this IIC was not permitted to travel to the accident site. FAA Inspector Addison Baxter, Jackson FSDO, Mississippi, responded to the accident site and provide on-scene documentation. A representative from Air Tractor also traveled to the site to assist with the accident investigation.

Wreckage Examination

The airframe was examined on-scene by inspectors from the FAA Baton Rouge FSDO and a representative from Air Tractor.

The following observations were made:

- The aircraft wreckage was found in a wooded area approximately 10 miles northwest of Newellton, LA.
 - The main wreckage was found 70 ft. west of highway LA-888, across the highway from the target field.
 - Power distribution lines were found running along the northern and western edges of the target field.
 - A 287-ft tall tower was found near the northwest corner of the target field.
- The airplane was found to have impacted two power distribution poles and power lines along the western edge of the target field before impacting the ground on highway LA-888.
- Propeller strike marks were found on the center of the highway with a northerly heading.
- A 20 ft. long ground scar was found running from the western edge of the highway to the southwest.
- The green wingtip navigation light was found at the southwest end of the ground scar.
- A debris path was found with a heading of 347° (magnetic) leading to the main wreckage.
- There was no evidence of a pre or post-impact fire.
- The airplane was equipped with Amsafe Inflatable Restraints which had deployed during the accident.

- All flight control surfaces were located with the wreckage.
 - The flight controls were damaged, but flight control continuity was established to the extent possible by the condition of the wreckage.
 - Flight control continuity could not be established due to impact damage.
 - All observed separations were consistent with overstress.
 - The elevator controls were found to be continuous from the control horns to the control stick attach point.
 - The rudder cables were traced forward from the rudder control horn and found to be continuous to the rudder pedal attach point.
 - The left aileron controls were found to be continuous from the control stick attach point to the left aileron control horn.
 - The right aileron controls were continuous from the control stick attach point to the inboard end of the aluminum wing mounted pushrod.
 - The aileron-rudder interconnect system was found to have been removed.
 - The flap system was found fully retracted and the flaps controls were found to be continuous from the flap actuator to both flap control horns.
 - The flap-elevator interconnect was found to have been removed.
- The engine was equipped with a five-bladed constant speed, fully reversible propeller.
 - 1 propeller blade was found attached to the propeller hub.
 - 1 blade was found in the wooded area 215 ft. south of the main wreckage.
 - 2 propeller blades were found together in target field 230 ft. southeast of the main wreckage.
 - The remaining blade was not located in the wreckage.
- Using evidence at the scene along with visual observations during the examination, the engine was determined to be operating at the time of the accident and not further examined.

There were no anomalies with the airframe and engine which would have precluded normal operation of the airplane.

Pilot's Medical History

On November 9, 2020, the pilot was issued a second-class medical certificate with the limitation, "must wear corrective lenses for near and distant vision." On his application for the medical certificate, the pilot reported the use of atorvastatin (used to treat high cholesterol). He reported a coronary stent was placed in January 2011 and had received the appropriate FAA waiver. The pilot reported having accrued 30,000 total hours with 50 hours in the preceding six months.

An autopsy was conducted on the pilot by the Louisiana Forensic Center, Broussard, Louisiana. The cause of death was a result of blunt force injuries. The manner of death was an accident. The autopsy noted:

- The heart weighs 600 g and has a normal configuration.

- The pericardial sac is free of significant fluid or adhesions.
- The coronary arteries arise normally, follow the usual distribution with evidence of moderate to severe atherosclerosis but no thrombosis.
- There is a stent in the circumflex and up to 50% stenosis of the native coronary arteries.
- There is biventricular dilation of 6.0 cm on the left and 5.0 cm on the right chambers and valves exhibit the usual size-position relationship and are unremarkable.
- The left ventricle measures 0.8 cm thick, the septum measures 0.8 cm thick and the right ventricle measures 0.3 cm thick.
- The myocardium is red-brown, firm with no focal lesions; there are lacerations of the heart.

A toxicology was performed on samples from the pilot which detected the presence of atorvastatin which had previously been reported to the FAA.

Pilot Background

The pilot was an experienced agricultural application pilot, having flown for more than 45 years. He had operated in the local area, for a number of years and would have been familiar with the transmission lines.

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