

National Transportation Safety Board

Office of Aviation Safety

Washington, DC 20594



CEN23FA391

EXAMINATION SUMMARY

August 31, 2023

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A. ACCIDENT

Location: Wellington, Colorado
Date: August 31, 2023
Time: 1358 MDT
1958 UTC
Airplane: Alexander Scheicher - ASH 26E - N50FU

B. EXAMINATION SUMMARY

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Investigator	Jason Aguilera NTSB Denver, Colorado
FAA IIC	Michael Stanley Federal Aviation Administration Denver, Colorado

C. SUMMARY

On-site examination of a glider ASH 26E airplane. According to flight track data the glider was performing an off-field landing. Examination of the accident sight showed the glider impacting terrain in a vertical dive in a field. Federal Aviation (FAA) inspector was present to participate and assist. The examination revealed no pre-accident mechanical anomalies that would have precluded normal operation of the glider.

D. DETAILS OF THE EXAMINATION

1.0 Accident Site

The glider impacted terrain (Lat/Long: +40.868942° / -105.082558°) in a field about 6 nautical miles northwest of the Owl Canyon Gliderport (4CO2). The glider came to rest facing about 213° about 15 ft rearward of the initial impact site. The entire glider was located at the accident site with no post-crash fire. The debris field included the main impact point out to radius of about 60 ft. A ground scar imprint of both wing leading edges was present in the terrain that equaled the wingspan distance of 59 ft. Location of the leading-

edge impression is consistent with the airplane in a nose down near vertical-to-vertical orientation at impact. The initial impact point consisted of a shallow circular ground impression surrounded by forward fuselage fragments. (See Figure 1.



Figure 1. Ground Impression

2.0 Airframe Examination

2.1 Fuselage

The fuselage came to rest upright with crush damage from the nose to the rear cockpit bulkhead. The forward fuselage was heavily fragmented consistent with a high energy near vertical impact. Various composite debris from the forward fuselage were found in the surrounding field. The pilot seat lap belt was found unlatched and underneath the pilot and the shoulder harnesses were found unlatched and stowed in the cockpit shelf behind the pilot seat. (See Figure 2)

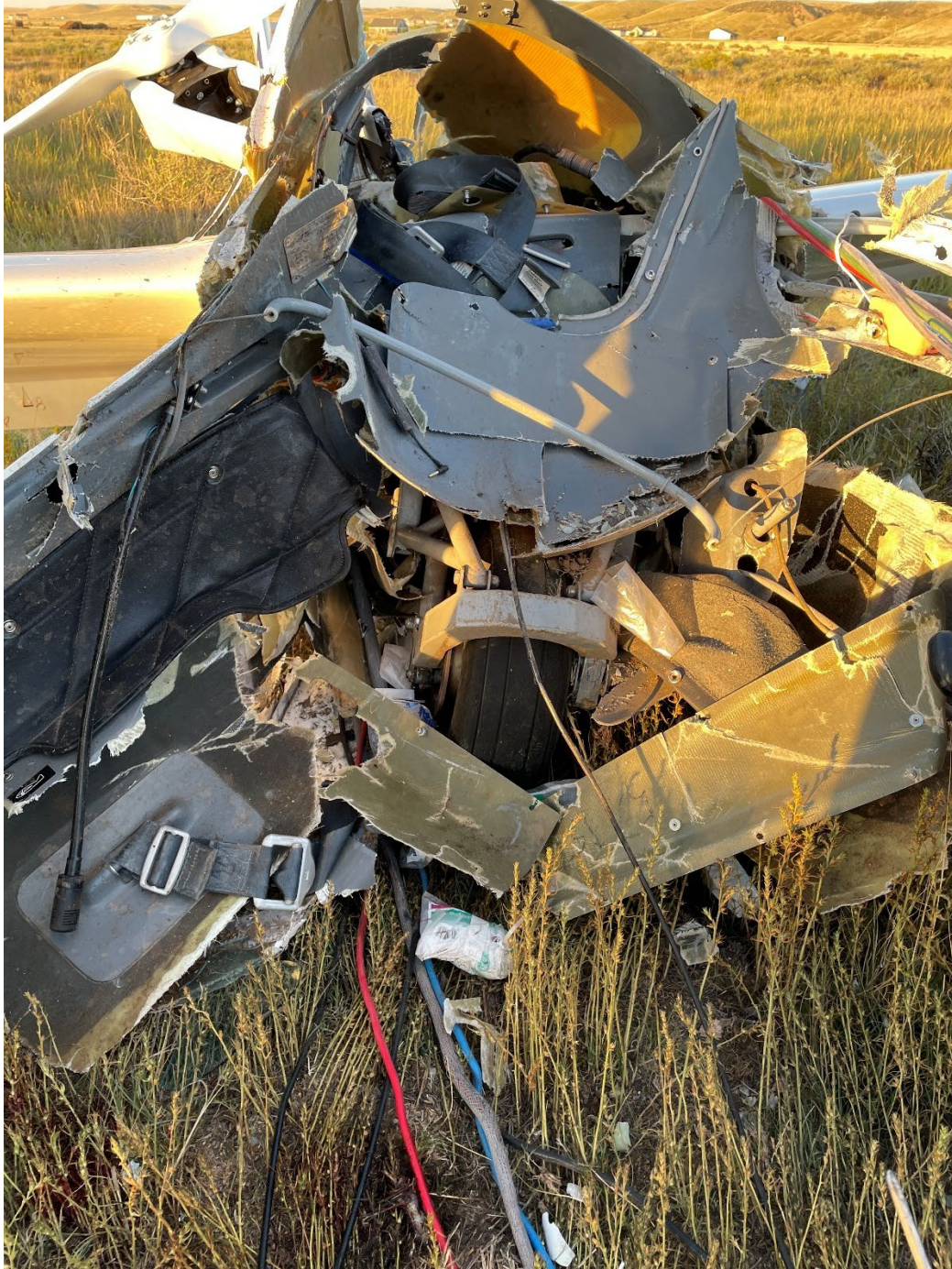


Figure 2. Fuselage

2.2 Empennage

The empennage came to rest still attached to the fuselage with crush damage on the first 2 ft of the tail boom. The stowable propeller assembly was in the unstowed and in the EXTENDED COOL DOWN position. Both engine bay doors were separated at their respective hinges and between the engine

and tail boom. (See Figure 3) The horizontal and vertical stabilizer had only cosmetic damage. Flight control continuity was established from the elevator and rudder to the fuselage cockpit rear bulkhead. Continuity from the bulkhead to the control stick and rudder pedals was not able to be determined due to crush damage and fragmentation of the forward fuselage.



Figure 3. Engine and Empennage

2.3 Wings

Both wings were found still attached to the fuselage. The leading edges of both wings had crush damage along with intermittent areas of composite delamination of the upper surface. The left wing had a break at mid span with the outer wing resting on the ground. Additionally, the left winglet had crush damage along the trailing edge with a corresponding mirrored ground scar/winglet impression. The flaps and flap handle were in the LANDING configuration. Flight control continuity was established from the elevator and rudder to the fuselage cockpit rear bulkhead. Continuity from the bulkhead to the control stick was not able to be determined due to crush damage and fragmentation of the forward fuselage.

2.4 Landing Gear

The main landing gear wheel was found within the fuselage. Position was not able to be determined due to impact damage. The landing gear position selector was not able to be located due to the fragmentation of the forward fuselage.

2.5 Cockpit

The cockpit was fragmented along with the forward fuselage from impact related damage. The engine controls were found in the RUN position with the throttle at SHUT. The master switch position could not be determined due to impact damage to the switch. All cockpit instruments were located with impact related damage. The LXNAV Variometer, S/N 05708, was recovered and shipped to the Recorders Lab for data download. The altimeter was located in the debris field with a selector altimeter setting of 29.91. The pilot lap seatbelt was found unlatched and underneath the pilot and the shoulder harness was found unlatched and stowed in the cockpit shelf behind the pilot seat. The handheld LXNAV Nano 3 Flight Recorder mounted on the glareshield was not located. The mount and attachment hardware was located in the debris field. However, the transmitted FLARM data was recovered by the soaring club. (See Figure 4)



Figure 4. Cockpit Instrument Panel

2.6 Survivability

No cockpit occupiable space remained in the cockpit as the forward fuselage was crushed back to the rear bulkhead and was fragmented.

3.0 Engine Examination

The propeller assembly was found unstowed in the EXTENDED COOL DOWN position and base separated from the empennage at the hinges. The engine bay doors were found open, separated at the hinges, and under the propeller assembly. The engine was retained for further examination which was not performed due to the wreckage being accidentally disposed of by the salvage company due to a paperwork mix up.

4.0 Propeller Examination

The propeller was found in the unstowed horizontal position. Both blades had no impact or rotational damage or witness marks. No mechanical failures or malfunctions could be found that would have precluded normal operation. (See Figure 5)



Figure 5. Propeller

5.0 Pilot Information

Pilot records were requested from the next of kin but not located. A blue ribbon copy of the pilot's airman file was requested from the FAA.

6.0 Aircraft Information

Alexander Scheicher - ASH 26E with the registration of N50FU and S/N 26248. This is a low wing self-launching motorglider equipped with a single engine reciprocating Astro Engine AE50R engine.

7.0 Meteorological Information

KFNL 311956Z 17011KT 10SM CLR 34/06 A2998 RMK AO2 SLP076
T03440061

Submitted by:

Andrew Finne
Air Safety Investigator