

National Transportation Safety Board

Office of Aviation Safety

Washington, DC 20594



CEN25FA047

AIFRAME & ENGINE EXAMINATIONS

January 13, 2025

A. ACCIDENT

Location: Drake, Colorado
Date: November 23, 2024
Time: 1110 Mountain Standard Time
1610 UTC
Airplane: Cessna 182T, N434CP

B. AIFRAME & ENGINE EXAMINATIONS

Lead Investigator (IIC)	Alexander Lemishko National Transportation Safety Board Aurora, Colorado
Party to Investigation	Andrew Sweed FAA FSDO Denver, Colorado
Party to Investigation	Ernest Hall Textron Aviation Wichita, Kansas
Party to Investigation	Troy Helgeson Lycoming Engines Williamsport, Pennsylvania
Party to Investigation	Charlene Garcia Civil Air Patrol HQ Aviation Safety Program Manager Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama

C. SUMMARY

On November 23, 2024, about 1115 mountain daylight time, a Cessna 182T airplane, N434CP was destroyed when it was involved in an accident near Drake, Colorado. The flight crew consisted of the pilot, a mission observer, and a photographer. The pilot and photographer sustained fatal injuries, and the mission observer sustained serious injuries. The airplane was operated as a Title 14 Code of Federal Regulations Part 91 federal public use training flight.

The flight was conducted by the Civil Air Patrol (CAP). The purpose/mission of the flight was to conduct aerial photography of the area for the Red Cross for emergency response planning. The flight originated from the Northern Colorado Regional Airport (FNL), Loveland, Colorado, about 0930. The pilot was seated in the front left seat, the pilot-rated mission observer (survivor) was seated in the right front seat, and the pilot-rated photographer was seated in the right rear seat.

According to Automated Dependent Surveillance - Broadcast (ADS-B) data, the airplane departed FNL and proceeded to fly to the area to be photographed.

The survivor stated that the flight consisted of flying large circles over mountain roads and a valley, and the photography mission was completed. After completing the mission, the pilot flew the airplane south of the mission area. The survivor thought that the pilot was returning to the FNL base. He stated that the aircraft was maneuvering over trees, about 1,500 AGL, heading toward higher terrain (a ridgeline). Within seconds, he heard the pilot say, "Oh [expletive]." The pilot lowered the nose and started to turn. He stated that the airplane seemed to drop, and that the airplane encountered a downdraft. He heard the airplane hitting trees, and the next thing that he remembered was being on the ground. He tried to help the pilot and photographer and was worried about a fire. He said that the entire sequence happened within seconds. Because of the impact, his cell phone called 911 automatically and connected him to a dispatcher. He was rescued by helicopter, and he stated that the rescue helicopter's flight nurse made a comment that the winds were swirling during the rescue.

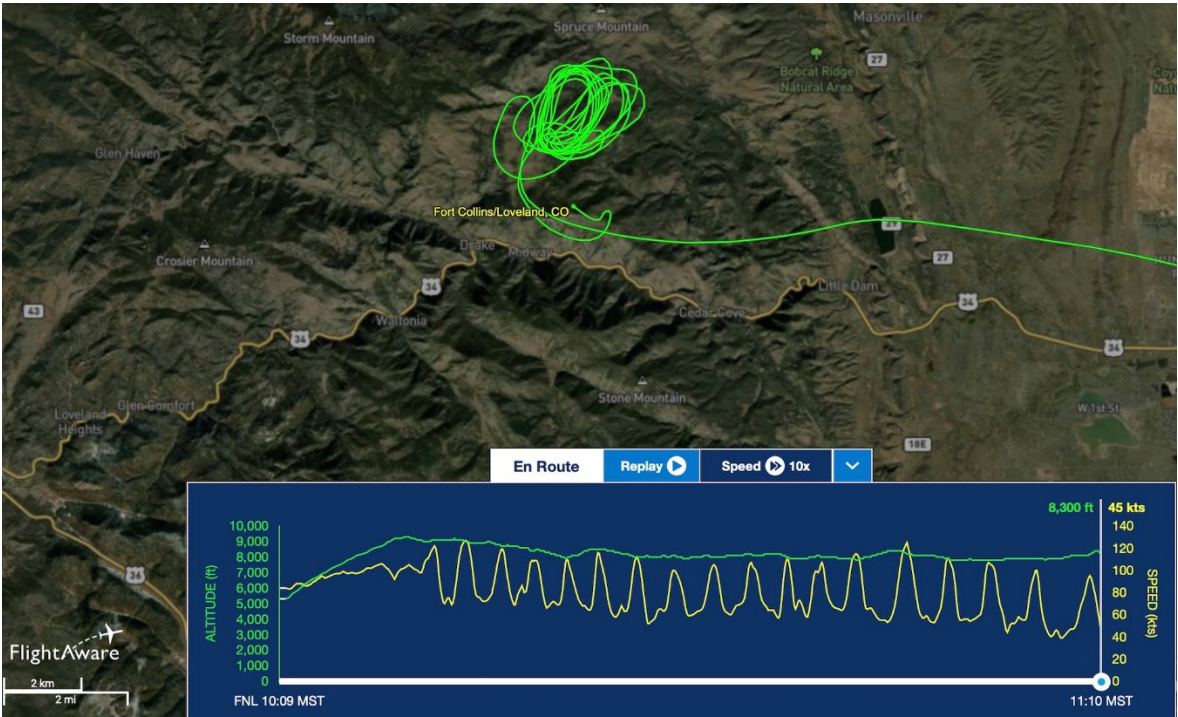
The survivor stated that the airplane and engine were operating normally throughout the entire flight, and that there were normal communications between the pilot, mission observer, and CAP base. There were no radio or distress calls heard from the pilot.

The accident site was located on a steep slope in rough mountainous terrain, and the wreckage was about 75 ft downslope from a ridgeline. All sections of the airplane were found within the accident area. The fuselage had severe impact damage to the cabin and the engine compartments. The fuselage was laying upslope and was upright. Portions of the left- and right-wing sections were lying on the ground, adjacent to the cabin section of the fuselage. A portion of the right outboard wing was found wrapped around a tree, about 35 ft up and about 50 ft downslope of the main wreckage. Tree branches in the accident area were found cut, consistent with contact with propeller blades. All three propeller blades had damage to their respective leading edges.

Due to the steep, rough terrain, onsite examinations were limited, and the wreckage was recovered to a secure facility for further detailed examinations of the airframe, flight controls, and engine.



On Scene Photo



Flight Track from ADS-B Data (FlightRadar24)

D. DETAILS OF THE EXAMINATION

Detailed examinations of the airframe, engine, and propeller were conducted on January 13, 2025, at Beegles Aviation Services, Greeley, Colorado.

The examination of the wreckage confirmed flight control continuity. An examination of the airplane's engine revealed no preaccident anomalies that would have precluded normal operation.