

Ronald J. Roberts



Destin, FL
32541

July 1, 2017

Witness Report: Aircraft Accident 30 June 2017

Location: 18FD Baker, Florida

Time: Late morning, prior to noon

I was located in my hangar approximately midway down the runway on the north side, when Joe Nunley taxied by in his experimental KR-2 aircraft. He had just landed to the west and executed a 180 degree turn on the runway in front of my hangar and started to taxi back toward the east. He waved as he went by. I assumed he was proceeding to his hangar to park his airplane. I started my golf cart and followed him down the runway, intending to stop at his hangar when he parked and invite to fly out with me to Peter Prince Airport in Milton for lunch.

He did not stop at his hangar but continued to the end of the runway and executed a 180 degree turn to take off on runway 27. I stopped my golf cart clear of the runway in the grass in front of Neal George's hangar and watched his run-up and departure to the west. All appeared normal as he lifted off approximately at mid-field and started his climb out. At approximately 300-500' AGL past the departure end of runway 27 I heard the engine sputter and change sound. This seemed to happen about the same time he made a 45 degree climbing turn to the right. He immediately executed a tight turn to the left and started a decent toward the ground. My first thought was he was trying to get back to land on runway 09. I also thought he may have had an engine failure. But I believe I heard the engine still running as he continued turning to the left. I cannot verify the power level but thought it was near idle. He continued a descending turn toward the approach of runway 09. The aircraft was turning with an extremely high sink rate. As he approached a point approximately 20 degrees off the runway 09 heading in a position left of the extended centerline of the runway, I felt he needed to stop the decent rate immediately or he would impact the ground. He did not arrest the decent and the aircraft continued all the way to impact in a 10-15 dive angle in what appeared to be a nose low attitude with a high sink rate and high velocity. Upon impact with the ground, the airplane disintegrated and pieces scattered across the ground. My initial thought after witnessing the crash, was that it was not a survivable event.

I immediately headed for the accident site and contacted 911 while I was enroute down the runway. In the time it took me to drive from the east end of the runway to the accident site in a golf cart, 911 was able to ascertain the nature and position of the accident and dispatched first responders. I arrived at the accident site and found Joe removed from the wreckage and alive on the ground lying face down. Cecil Jones and a nearby neighbor had helped Joe get out of the wreckage and were rendering aid. The airplane was totally destroyed and Joe did not appear to be bleeding from any external wounds, but was severely injured. He was conscious, mentally confused, and disorientated. He was able to talk and complained of pain in his legs, trouble breathing and pain in his back. Other individual citizens arrived on scene and were rendering aid.

The Baker Fire Department Chief was the first county official on site and proceeded to call other responders including the OCSO. The Fire Chief attempted to assess the injuries and cut the back of Joe's shirt to look for bleeding. Soon thereafter, Okaloosa County Deputies arrived and took control of the scene.

I left the site once Joe was loaded on the Life Flight helicopter for transport to Ft. Walton Beach Medical Center.

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