

To whom it may concern:

My name is Jeffrey Hudson, Light Sport C.F.I. [REDACTED] ASEL and Gyrocopter.

This report is my timeline recollection of the Auto Gyro Cavalon N198LT which crashed on October 30, 2018, resulting in two fatalities.

On Monday October 29, 2018 I flew with Chris Lord in an ELA Eclipse 10 gyrocopter from Sebring Florida (KSEF) at 8:40 am to North Palm Beach County Airport (F45), a distance of 70nm arriving at 9:30am.

The propose of the flight was to ferry an Auto Gyro Cavalon Experimental gyrocopter N198LT back to Sebring Florida. Chris Lord would then fly the gyrocopter on Wednesday to the Deland Light Sport Airshow to demo and try to sell the Cavalon.

Upon arriving at North Pam Beach County Airport, the people Chris was to meet came out to the ramp where the Cavalon was parked. They met briefly with Chris Lord. The people who met Chris on the ramp went back inside, Chris came over to the Eclipse 10 gyro where I was waiting and said they were getting the log book signed off for the 40 hours per the experimental requirement. They brought out the paperwork and gave it to Chris Lord. He then did a preflight on the Cavalon. We departed for Sebring, I flew the Eclipse 10, Chris the Cavalon N198LT. We departed at 10am and arrived in Sebring at 10:55am.

Shortly after takeoff Chris called me on the radio and said the airspeed indicator was not working, and the gyrocopter seemed to have excessive stick shake. He made a video of the stick shake on his phone and passed it on to Terri Rose C.E. O. of Auto Gyro U.S.A.

When we got back to the hanger at Sebring, Chris checked the back of the airspeed indicator on the Cavalon N198LT and remarked he did not think it had ever been hooked up.

This made us wonder if the 40 hours Phase 1 testing had been done.

We also noticed fuel in the overflow trays under the carburetors, so we removed the engine cowls and retorqued the carburetor float bowls to 48inch pounds per the Rotax manual. We inspected the rest of engine compartment and replaced the engine cowls.

Chris and I taxied out and flew the pattern at Sebring to see how the stick shake was with two people on board, found no Improvement. The airspeed indicator did work now.

Back at the hanger we placed a small washer in one of the rotor blades, a technique to balance the rotor blades, when spinning the washer would sling to the rotor tip and balance the rotor. Chris and I then flew the pattern again to check the rotor balance. The stick shake persisted.

We removed the washer and placed it in the other rotor blade and tried another flight. The stick shake persisted.

At this point we removed the washer and Chris said it was probably a rotor tracking issue.

We put the gyrocopter back in the hanger and left for the day.

The next day Tuesday October 30, 2018, Chris Lord flew the Cavalon N198LT solo from Sebring at about 7:00am to fly to Tailwinds Airport, a private strip north of North County Airport to look over another pilot's gyrocopter there on the field. He returned to Sebring about 12:00 noon. I was not present when he left or returned.

I got to the Sebring Airport about 12:30pm, Chris did not mention any issues with the Cavalon N198LT.

About 2:45pm Chris Lord departed with another gyrocopter pilot, Chris Brugger. Chris Lord was taking Chris Brugger to the Manatee Airport (48X) about 63nm west of Sebring to drop him off there. About 10 minutes after they departed in the Cavalon N198LT it crashed approximately 8nm west of the Sebring Airport.

This statement and timeline are correct to the best of my knowledge.

Jeffrey A. Hudson

