

**Wreckage Examination
NTSB Accident Number
ERA21FA333**

ACCIDENT

Location:	Wadesboro, NC (AFP)
Date:	August 20, 2021
Time:	1013 EDT
Aircraft:	Piper PA-24-250
Registration	N8262P

PARTICIPANTS (On Scene)

Robert J Gretz
Sr. Air Safety Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board
Eastern Region Aviation

Michael Guidice
Aviation Safety Inspector
FAA Charlotte FSDO

Damian Galbraith
Air Safety Investigator
Piper Aircraft
Vero Beach, FL

James Childers
Air Safety Investigator
Lycoming Engines
Williamsport, PA

HISTORY OF FLIGHT

On August 20, 2021, about 1013 eastern daylight time, a Piper PA-24-250, N8262P, was destroyed when it was involved in an accident near Wadesboro, North Carolina. The pilot and passenger were fatally injured. The airplane was operated as a Title 14 *Code of Federal Regulations* Part 91 personal flight.

According to the previous owner of the airplane, he had purchased the airplane as a restoration project about 3 years ago but was unable to complete the restoration due to life circumstances and decided to sell it. He sold it on August 4, 2021, to the pilot, who was an A&P/IA. The pilot drove his truck from Florida to Darr Field (NC03), High Point, North Carolina. He planned to complete repairs, perform an annual inspection, and fly the airplane back to Florida. The repairs included replacing hoses, rebuilding a jammed fuel selector valve, repairing a corroded fuel line, and removing and checking one magneto. On the day of the accident, the airplane flew from NC03 to Anson County Airport (AFP), Wadesboro, North Carolina uneventfully.

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The pilot purchased 51 gallons of fuel AFP and departed for LaBelle Municipal Airport (X14), LaBelle, Florida. Witnesses reported that the airplane departed runway 34 and reached an altitude about 400 ft above ground level before the engine began to sputter. The airplane then turned left and descended nose down into wooded terrain, where a postcrash fire ensued.



PERSONNEL INFORMATION

Pilot information provided to NTSB IIC by FAA inspector Mike Moran.

AIRCRAFT INFORMATION

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The airplane was manufactured in 1963 and equipped with a Lycoming O-540-A1D5, 250-hp engine, driving a two-bladed Hartzell constant speed propeller. The maintenance logbooks were not recovered and presumed destroyed in the accident.

METEOROLOGICAL INFORMATION

KAFP 201415Z AUTO 29003KT 10SM CLR 28/23 A2995

COMMUNICATIONS

N/A

FLIGHT RECORDERS

N/A

WRECKAGE AND IMPACT INFORMATION

The wreckage came to rest inverted, oriented east, about 1/2 mile north-northwest of the runway 34 departure end. The cockpit and cabin were partially consumed by fire. The throttle, mixture and propeller levers were observed in the full forward position. The magnetos were selected to both and the electric fuel pump switch was in the on position. The fuel selector valve was separated, exhibited thermal damage and was positioned to the left main fuel tank. The gascolator bowl was partially consumed by fire and its fuel screen was absent of debris. The propeller spinner remained attached to the mounts and exhibited torsional deformation. The nose landing had separated and was fire damaged. The two electric fuel pumps were thermally damaged and their internal fuel filters were destroyed.



The right wing came to rest upright separated from the fuselage, was buckled and charred, and its flap and aileron remained attached. The right flap was observed in a 10° extended position; however, meas-

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urement of the flap actuator jackscrew corresponded to a flaps retracted setting. The right main landing gear remained attached, and measurement of the landing gear actuator cable corresponded to a gear retracted position. The left wing remained attached to a separated section of fuselage and was partially consumed by fire. The left main landing gear remained attached to the left wing. Sections of the left aileron and left flap were found near the left wing and had also sustained fire damage. About 6 ft of the outboard section of the left wing, including wingtip, was located near the main wreckage and exhibited impact damage. Another 8-ft section of center left wing section was located suspended about 50 ft up in an adjacent tree. That section contained about 3 ft of inboard aileron and a stall vane, as well as the aileron bell-crank.

The empennage remained intact, and the vertical stabilizer exhibited impact damage to its upper leading-edge area. The rudder remained attached to the vertical stabilizer. The stabilator remained attached and exhibited impact damage to the right outboard area. The stabilator trim tab remained attached and measurement of its jackscrew corresponded to a neutral stabilator trim setting. Flight control continuity was established from the cockpit area through impact and recovery separations to their respective flight control surfaces (ailerons, rudder, stabilator, and stabilator trim.)

The engine came to rest inverted, nose down. One propeller blade remained attached to the propeller hub and the other blade had separated and was located underneath the engine. Both blades exhibited tip curling and the attached blade exhibited leading edge damage. The top spark plugs were removed. Their electrodes were intact, and the No. 1 electrode was oil soaked. The engine sustained front impact damage and the crankshaft could only be rotated about 90°. Camshaft and crankshaft continuity were confirmed to the rear accessory section and the rear accessory section was then removed. Holes were drilled into the top of the engine crankcase to facilitate borescope examination. Additionally, fire consumed the oil sump and a portion of the lower crankcase, which allowed visual and borescope examination from the underside of the engine. Visual and borescope examination of the cylinders, and through the top and bottom crankcase did not reveal any preimpact mechanical malfunctions.



The carburetor was impact separated from the engine and sustained thermal damage. Disassembly of the carburetor revealed the two floats present at the bottom of the bowl and all seals destroyed. The carburetor fuel inlet screen was absent of debris. The engine driven fuel pump remained attached to the engine and was destroyed. All fuel and oil hoses were destroyed by fire. Both magnetos remained attached to the

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engine and were destroyed by fire. The right magneto was rotated by hand, but no spark was produced. The left magneto could not be rotated by hand. The starter remained attached to the engine, was fire damaged and not removed. The starter nose case exhibited rotational scoring from contact with the starter ring gear. The vacuum pump remained attached and was removed and partially disassembled. The composite drive coupling was melted, but the vanes and rotors were intact. The oil pressure screen was absent of metallic debris. The propeller governor remained partially attached to the engine and its cable was separated.

MEDICAL AND PATHOLOGICAL INFORMATION

TBD.

WITNESS STATEMENTS AND CONTACT INFORMATION

Witness statements obtained by FAA.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Wreckage Recovery: Atlanta Air Recovery