



NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

Office of Aviation Safety

Wreckage Examination

A. ACCIDENT ERA21LA290

Location: Piermont, New Hampshire
Date: July 16, 2021
Time: 1945 Eastern Daylight Time (EDT)
Operator: Boland Balloon
Aircraft: Experimental Balloon
Registration: N2925L

B. PARTICIPANTS:

IIC: Peter Wentz
National Transportation Safety Board
Ashburn, Virginia

Participant: John Keefe
Federal Aviation Administration
South Portland, Maine

Participant: Andrew Baird
Cameron Balloons US
Dexter, Michigan

C. SUMMARY

On July 15, 2021, about 1945 eastern daylight time, an amateur-built balloon registered as N2925L, a Cameron Balloon 0-105, was substantially damaged when it was involved in an accident near Piermont, New Hampshire. The pilot was fatally injured, one passenger received minor injuries and three passengers were not injured. The balloon was operated as a Title 14 *Code of Federal Regulations* Part 91 sightseeing flight.

According to a passenger, the balloon departed Post Mills Airport (2B9), Post Mills, Vermont, with the pilot and four passengers about 1830 and flew northeast along the Connecticut River toward Bradford, Vermont. The balloon was aloft about 45 minutes when the pilot reported the pilot light on the burner was not lit. He changed to a new propane tank but could not locate the striker to relight the burner. The balloon had started to descend while the pilot searched the balloon basket for the striker. He did not locate the original striker but did locate the backup in the supply pocket. The balloon had descended toward the ground by this point and the pilot had re-lit the pilot light; however, he could not get the balloon to climb before impacting a field 2.25 miles south of Bradford, Vermont. One passenger and the pilot were thrown from the basket upon impacting the field. The balloon then started to rise (due to less weight of the two ejected occupants) and the pilot's foot was trapped between the balloon attach rope and the basket frame. The pilot untangled his foot but remained hanging below the basket for an estimated 1.25 miles before falling to a field near the Connecticut river. The remaining passengers contacted the balloon ground support personnel via a handheld radio and received instructions on how to operate the balloon controls in preparation for landing. The balloon traveled about 3.45 miles from the ejection site before it impacted trees and landed in a wooded area.

The location of the thumb tack in the figure is the Lat/Long of the accident site (29°58'1.82"N 81°21'1.31"W).

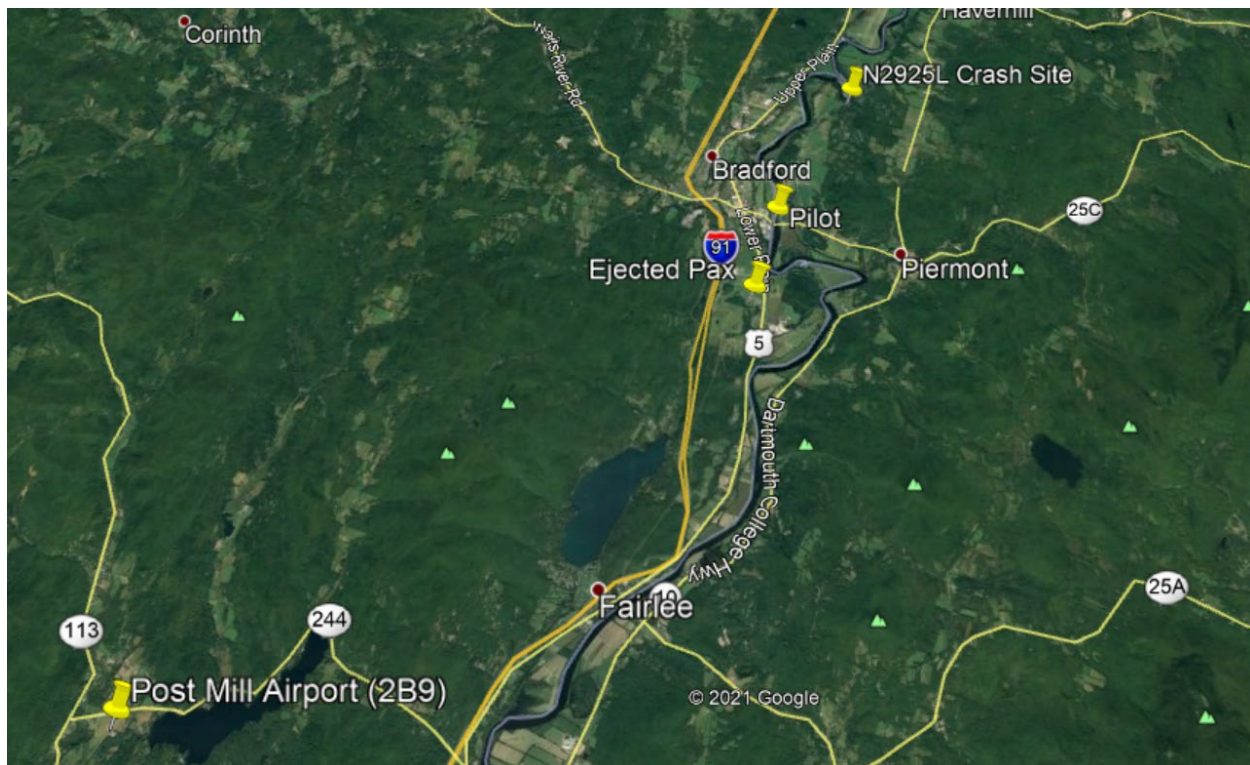
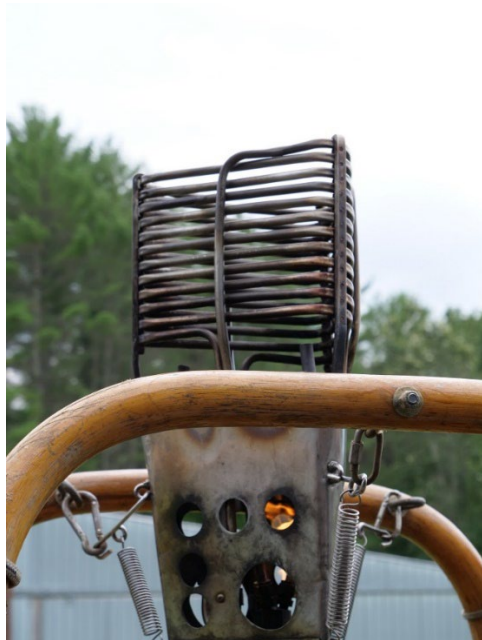


Figure 1 – Preliminary Radar Track

D. Examination

The balloon was examined at the pilot's hangar at 2B9 on July 21, 2021. The balloon was not manufactured by Cameron Balloon US. The basket and burner were manufactured by Galaxy Balloons, the propane gas tanks were manufactured by Worthington and the envelope was an experimental envelope built by the pilot. The basket, propane tanks, and burner operated normally. The burner's pilot light was lit without difficulty.



The envelope was removed from its storage bag and laid out for examination. No anomalies were noted with the basket or envelope that would have precluded normal operation.

