

National Transportation Safety Board

Office of Aviation Safety

Washington, DC 20594



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WRECKAGE EXAMINATION SUMMARY

October 31, 2021

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A. ACCIDENT

Location: Chattahoochee, FL
Date: October 31, 2021
Time: 1320 EDT
1720 UTC
Airplane: RV-4

B. WRECKAGE EXAMINATION SUMMARY

IIC	Daniel Boggs National Transportation Safety Board Daytona Beach, FL
Party Member	Mike Childers Lycoming Engines

C. SUMMARY

On October 31, 2021, about 1320 eastern daylight time, an experimental, amateur-built Vans RV-4, N479JJ, was destroyed when it was involved in an accident near Chattahoochee, Florida. The pilot was fatally injured. The airplane was operated as a Title 14 Code of Federal Regulations Part 91 personal flight.

The pilot departed Tallahassee International Airport (TLH), Tallahassee, Florida, about 1303 destined for Monroe County Aeroplex Airport (MVC), Monroeville, Alabama. After departure, an air traffic controller terminated radar services and approved the pilot to change radio frequencies. About 17 minutes later, radar contact was lost.

According to automatic dependent surveillance-broadcast (ADS-B) data obtained from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), the airplane climbed northbound to about 3,000 ft mean sea level (msl) after departure, then it turned right about 90° to the east, then back to the north. The airplane descended to about 2,500 ft and overflowed Lake Jackson then headed westbound before turning northwest bound. The airplane's altitude varied between about 2,000 and 2,500 ft. As the airplane flew about .70 nautical miles southwest of Mount Pleasant, it began to lose groundspeed and began turning left and descending, then gaining ground speed while continuing to descend.

Radar contact with the airplane was lost about 17 minutes after takeoff. The last data track showed the airplane at 650 ft and a ground speed of 172 knots.

An off-duty law enforcement officer was doing yardwork at his house when the airplane's bubble-style canopy fell in his yard (the airplane was equipped with a bubble-style canopy that was hinged on the side). The canopy was about 1.5 miles away from the main wreckage.

D. DETAILS OF THE INVESTIGATION

1.0 Accident Site

The accident site was in a wooded area and the wreckage path was about 550 ft long . The airplane was heavily fragmented and scattered along a debris path on a heading of about 220° magnetic.

2.0 Airframe Examination

The outboard portion of the right wing, including the aileron, was separated and found in the vicinity of an initial tree strike. Small pieces of sheet metal, wheel pants, pieces of the carburetor, fuel tank wing sections and stringers were located along the wreckage path for about 400 ft. The empennage was leaning against a tree with impression marks about 15 ft up the tree. The inboard section of the left wing was found about 500 ft along the wreckage path. The fuel tank was breached, and the left wing was fire damaged. The canopy was impact damaged and the frame was bent in several areas. The locking mechanism on the canopy could not be tested.

3.0 Engine Examination

The engine, propeller, pieces of the landing gear, and parts of the instrument panel were located at the end of the wreckage path. Both propeller blades were impact separated.

Submitted by:

Daniel Boggs
Air Safety Investigator