



NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

Office of Aviation Safety
Western Pacific Region

Apr 9, 2019

ONSITE EXAMINATION NOTES

WPR19FA106

A. ACCIDENT

Location: Santa Fe, NM
Date: Apr 8, 2019
Aircraft: N118LS
NTSB IIC: Albert Nixon

B. EXAMINATION PARTICIPANTS:

Albert Nixon
Senior Aviation Accident Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board
Federal Way, WA

C. SUMMARY

Examination of the airplane wreckage was conducted on April 9, 2019, at the accident site at the Santa Fe Regional Airport, Santa Fe, New Mexico. No evidence of preimpact mechanical failure or malfunction was noted during the examination of the airframe and engine.

D. DETAILS OF THE INVESTIGATION

1.0 WRECKAGE AND IMPACT INFORMATION

Examination of the accident site revealed that the airplane impacted terrain about 527 ft northeast from the departure end of runway 33, at the Santa Fe Regional Airport, Santa Fe, New Mexico. The elevation was about 6303 ft. The terrain was flat, desert, and with very light vegetation. All major components of the airplane were contained within the main wreckage site. Wreckage debris was scattered about 100 ft from the main wreckage. The first identified point of contact was a large area of disturbed dirt, about 2 ft long by 2 ft wide in size and 2 inches deep, where several pieces of the lens from the green position light were located. The disturbance was about 91 ft from the main wreckage. About 18 ft further, another ground disturbance about 2 1/2 ft long, 2 ft wide, and an inch deep, where propeller splinters and the top third of a blade were located. Ground scars emanated from this area of disturbed dirt to the area where the main fuselage came to rest. The debris trail was about on a 005° magnetic heading. The airplane's fuselage came to rest upright on a heading of about 175° magnetic. There was a postimpact fire that consumed the left wing and the cabin area.



Figure 1: Airplane wreckage debris trail as viewed looking towards the departure end of runway 33.

The right wing separated from the fuselage and the left wing was partially separated. The empennage was partially separated from the fuselage aft cockpit. Flight control continuity was established from the individual flight controls surfaces to the center portion of the cabin.

The right wing's leading edge exhibited buckling about mid-span and was slightly thermally damaged. The right flap and aileron were attached. The left wing was totally consumed by thermal damage. The remnants of the flap and aileron were still attached. The right wing had the stall detector installed but sustained thermal and impact damage.

The empennage was relatively intact. The vertical stabilizer and rudder were attached to their respective attachment points. The left and right horizontal stabilizer and elevator were attached and were relatively undamaged. The rudder trim tab was observed slightly left of the neutral position. The elevator trim was observed in the neutral position.

The instrument control panel and cabin area were substantially thermally damaged, and no instrumentation could be read. The top of the cabin was consumed by the thermal damage.



Figure 2: The engine as view from the left side (engine inverted).

The Rotax engine came to rest inverted about 90° to the left of the fuselage heading. The engine was separated from all of the engine mounts. The two-bladed wood propeller remained attached to the crankshaft and sustained thermal damage. One of the blades was separated near the hub and about a 1/3 section of it and several splinters were located near the initial impact area. Some of the blade splinters exhibited chordwise scratches. The propeller spinner was separated and exhibited impact markings.

The airplane wreckage was recovered to a secure facility for further examination.

Submitted by: Albert Nixon