



NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

Office of Aviation Safety
Western Pacific Region

January 25, 2020

ONSITE EXAMINATION NOTES

WPR20FA077

A. ACCIDENT

Location: Auburn, CA
Date: January 24, 2020
Aircraft: N50249
NTSB IIC: Albert Nixon

B. EXAMINATION PARTICIPANTS:

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

Joseph Mitchell
Principle Maintenance Inspector
Federal Aviation Administration
Sacramento, CA

C. SUMMARY

Examination of the airplane wreckage was conducted on January 24 and 25, 2020, at the accident site about 1 mile northeast of the Auburn Municipal Airport (AUN), Auburn, California. 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 black and red colored airplane impacted trees near the top of a hill. The rocky terrain was heavily wooded. About two dozen of freshly broken tree branches were located on the ground under the trees that the airplane had impacted. Additionally, two small sections of the airplane were located in the trees at a height of about 35 ft. The wreckage site was at an elevation of about 1,420 ft. All major components of the airplane were contained within the main wreckage site. Most of the wreckage debris, consisting of small fragments, was scattered about 30 ft from the main wreckage.



Figure 1: Airplane wreckage as viewed from the right side.

The left wing had separated from the fuselage and was located in front of the main wreckage. The fuselage came to rest pointed downward on a heading of about 206° magnetic. Rescue personnel had cut the left side of the cabin and seat belts. Recovery personnel separated the right wing from the fuselage and cut the engine from the main fuselage. There was no postimpact fire.

The left wing sustained substantial leading-edge damage on the entire span. The left flap and aileron were attached at all their respective attachment points. The left main wheel and wheel fairing had separated and were located on the ground near the main wreckage.

The right wing sustained substantial leading-edge damage on the entire span. The right flap and aileron were attached at all their respective attachment points. The flap appeared to be partially extended. Fuel was observed leaking out of the inboard portion of the wing during recovery. The right main wheel and fairing had separated and was located on the roof.

The fuselage was bent upward and bent about 90° to the left about aft of the cabin area. The empennage remained attached to the fuselage and was relatively intact. The vertical stabilizer and rudder were attached to their respective attachment points. The left and right horizontal stabilizers were attached and relatively intact. The right horizontal stabilizer was separated about

at the midpoint and was the outboard sections was located impacted on a tree branch. Flight control continuity was able to be established from the right aileron to the right-wing root and from the left aileron to the inboard portion of the wing. Continuity was unable to be established to the rudder and elevators due to the impact damage.



Figure 2: Airplane wreckage with airplane parts lodged in the trees above.

The instrument control panel revealed the following: The fuel selector was observed in the on position. The ignition was in both. The attitude indicator indicated about left bank of about 30° of left bank and nose down. The carb heat was off, the primer was closed, the throttle and mixture levers were in the full forward position, and the propeller was about a half inch from the full forward position. The flaps were in the retracted position

On the circuit breaker panel, the marker beacon and nav lights circuit breakers were in the open position. The ELT was found intact, secured in position. The front seat's left and right lap and shoulder belts, and the rear seat lap beat, were cut by rescue personnel.

The engine came to rest partially attached to the front of the fuselage, located near the ground. The engine appeared to be attached at its engine mounts. All engine accessories appeared to be

present. No oil was observed leaking at the wreckage site. During the wreckage recovery, the fuel line to the engine was cut and fuel was observed in the line.

No bird remains or feathers were present in any of the windshield fragments, in the cabin area, or the main wreckage.

The two-bladed propeller was attached to the crankshaft. One blade was relatively intact. The second blade was bent aft and twisted about mid-span. The propeller hub was still attached to the crankshaft flange. The propeller spinner was attached and sustained impact markings and was crushed.

The site examination was completed, and the airplane wreckage was recovered to a secure location for future examination.

Submitted by: Albert Nixon