

National Transportation Safety Board

Office of Aviation Safety

Washington, DC 20594



WPR22FA021

ON-SCENE FIELD NOTES

October 23, 2021

TABLE OF CONTENTS

A. ACCIDENT	3
B. ON-SCENE FIELD NOTES	3
C. SUMMARY	3
D. DETAILS OF THE INVESTIGATION	3
1.0 ACCIDENT SITE	3
2.0 AIRFRAME EXAMINATION.....	4
2.1 Fuselage.....	4
2.2 Empennage	4
2.3 Wings	5
2.4 Cockpit.....	5
2.5 Other Systems	6
3.0 ENGINE EXAMINATION	6
4.0 PROPELLER EXAMINATION	7
5.0 PILOT INFORMATION	7
6.0 METEOROLOGICAL INFORMATION	7

A. ACCIDENT

Location: Dunsmuir, California
Date: October 20, 2021
Time: 1100 Pacific daylight time (PDT)
1800 coordinated universal time (UTC)
Airplane: N5268Q

B. ON-SCENE FIELD NOTES

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C. SUMMARY

On October 20, 2021, about 1100 pacific standard time, a Cessna 150L, N5268Q, was substantially damaged when it was involved in an accident near Dunsmuir, California. The pilot was fatally injured. The airplane was operated as a Title 14 Code of Federal Regulations Part 91 personal flight.

D. DETAILS OF THE INVESTIGATION

1.0 Accident Site

The airplane was located about 2 nm northwest of Dunsmuir, California on a mountain side at a field elevation of about 5,290 ft msl. The airplane came to rest on a 15° slope on a heading of 350° magnetic. The first point of impact (FPI) was identified by two 40-foot-tall pine trees and several broken tree branches. A debris path was marked by subsequent tree strikes that began about 75 ft forward of the FPI and was oriented on a heading of 360° magnetic. The left wing was separated and found 20

feet southeast of the main wreckage. The main wreckage marked the end of the debris path and was located at 41.2197222, -122.308889, about 225 ft beyond the FPI.

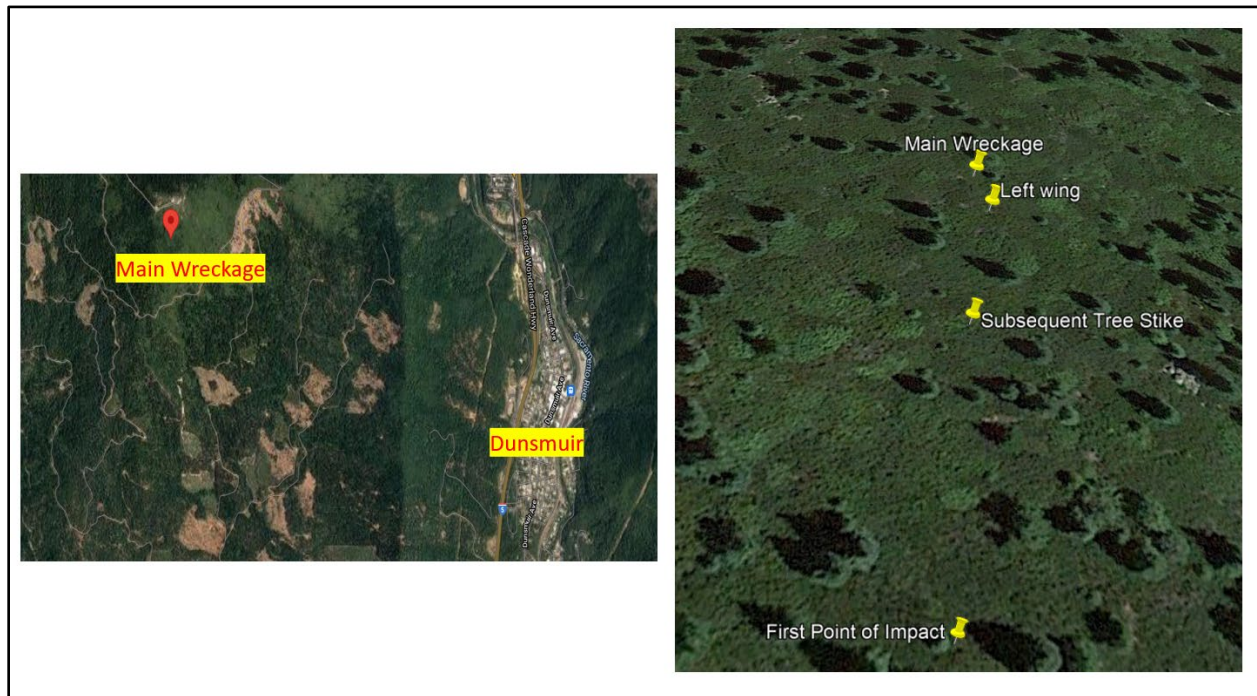


Figure 1. Location of main wreckage and accident site

2.0 Airframe Examination

An on-scene wreckage examination was performed due to a lack of insurance and possible recovery. The airframe's serial number was 15073168. Examination of the wreckage revealed no mechanical anomalies or malfunctions that would have precluded normal operation.

2.1 Fuselage

The fuselage and cabin came to rest upright. The windscreen and both cabin doors separated from the forward left and right door post. The cabin roof remained attached to the upper aft section of the fuselage.

2.2 Empennage

The left horizontal stabilizer remained attached except for its tip that remained mostly undamaged. The right stabilizer remained attached but displayed leading edge compression damage. The vertical stabilizer remained attached to the tailcone but was displayed to the left; compression damage was displayed on the left side of the tailcone near at the base of the vertical stabilizer. The rudder remained attached with minimal impact damage. Its respective cables remained attached to the

bellcrank with the bellcrank displayed from impact damage. The elevators remained attached to its respective bellcrank; elevator trim continuity was confirmed. Both elevator and elevator trim cables displayed overload damage.

2.3 Wings

The right wing separated from its wing root forward attachment point and came to rest upright, with its outboard section partially resting on top of the tailcone. The right wing displayed a large compression damage on the leading edge starting 3 ft to 5 ft from its wing root, consistent with a tree strike. Its flight control cables cut through the upper skin up to midspan and displayed broom straw failure, consistent with tension overload. The right-wing tip was separated. Fuel was seen and sensed inside the right tank. The right aileron and flap remained attached and had impact compression damage. Flight continuity was confirmed from the aileron and the flap bellcrank to the cockpit.

The left wing separated from its wing root attachment point and came to rest upright, about 20 ft southeast of the main wreckage: it displayed compression wrinkles across the span of the wing. Two large compression damages were displayed on its leading edge: one near the outboard and the other near inboard section of the wing, spanning about 3 ft each. The left-wing tip was separated. The upper section of the left lift strut remained attached to the left wing while its lower section was separated from the fuselage. Fuel was seen and sensed inside the left tank. The left aileron and flap remained attached and displayed impact compression damage. Flight control cable continuity was confirmed from the aileron and the flap bellcrank to the cockpit. Flight control cables cut through the upper skin up to midspan and displayed broom straw failure, consistent with tension overload. Flaps were in the up position. The elevator trim was in the neutral position.

2.4 Cockpit

The master switch was in the OFF position. All other instrument switches were also in the OFF position. The ignition was in the BOTH position. The fuel selector lever was in the ON position. The aircraft was modified by removing pilot and copilot seats by a bench installation. The control yokes were also modified by a dragster type steering wheel.

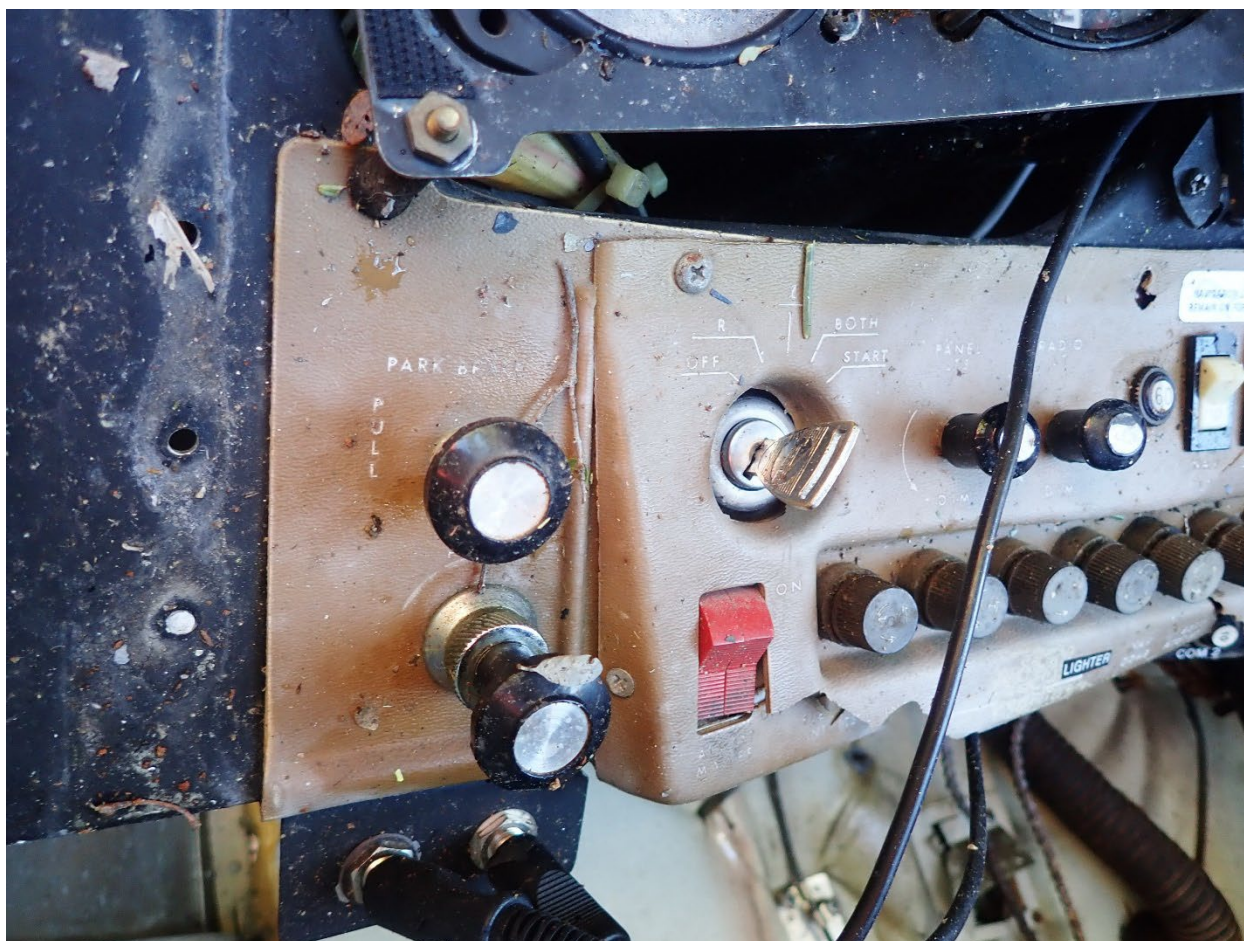


Figure 2. View of ignition and batter switches (Courtesy of the airframe manufacturer)

2.5 Other Systems

The brake lines in the cockpit were moved and hydraulic fluid was seen escaping the damaged hydraulic lines.

3.0 Engine Examination

The engine was inverted and displaced to the left of the fuselage. The engine remained attached to its engine mounts, which was attached to the firewall. All four cylinders remained attached. Each bottom spark plug was removed, and each spark plug was wet and oily, with black deposit of carbon; each of its electrodes were intact. Examination of the lower section of each cylinder revealed that each piston, wall, and upper spark plug remained intact. Each piston displayed carbon buildup and each upper spark plug had its electrodes intact with carbon buildup. The position of the engine did not allow the inspection of the upper section of the engine. The exhaust remained attached and secured. The oil sump remained attached and was removed; it was intact and had oil inside. The carburetor and its hoses, mixture lever and cable, and throttle lever and cable were secured and remained intact. No anomalies were

discovered after the removal of the carburetor. The vacuum pump remained attached and was removed; its coupling was intact in one piece. The fuel filter bowl was secured and removed; fuel was present inside the bowl with the filter screen free of debris. Both left and right magneto remained attached and secured along with its corresponding sparkplug wires. Each was removed and both coupling was attached and engaged when the gear was rotated. The battery remained attached with its connectors secured. The alternator remained attached and secured; it was removed, and fan rotated freely, and its wires remained attached and secured. The voltage regulator remained attached to the firewall with its connector and wires secured.

Post examination of the alternator using a multimeter revealed that there was no electric continuity.

4.0 Propeller Examination

The two McCauley blades were attached to the engine at the propeller hub with both blades bent aft about midspan. The crankshaft was slightly displaced to the left from impact damage. One blade displayed some chordwise scratches. The other blade was partially underneath the engine and could not be inspected. Several tree branches with 45-degree cuts were observed in the debris path,

5.0 Pilot Information

According to FAA airmen records, the pilot had an expired student pilot certificate and reported civil flight experience that included 200 and 0 hours in the last six months as of the last dated Aviation Medical Examiner examination from March 16, 1999. A witness added that the pilot has been flying as long as he has owned the airplane, which covers about 20 years.

6.0 Meteorological Information

On the day of the accident, at 0840 PDT, the weather recorded at Rogue Valley International - Medford Airport (MFR), Medford, Oregon, elevation 1,335 ft, located about 15 nm from S03 (the last departure airport), included winds were 0 knots, visibility of 10 statute miles (sm), clouds broken at 6,500 ft, overcast at 8,500, temperature and dewpoint at 9°/8°C respectively, and an altimeter setting of 29.96 inches of Hg.

At 1050 PDT, the weather conditions recorded at Dunsmuir Municipal-Mott Airport (1O6), Dunsmuir, CA, elevation 3,261 ft, located about 3 nm northeast of the accident site, included winds at 100° at 4 knots, visibility 2 sm, light rain, clouds scattered at 700 ft, broken at 1600 ft, and overcast at 2500 ft. The elevation of the accident site was about 5,314 ft.

A power company lineman supervisor working on the near the summit of Mt. Bradley on the day of the accident reported that there was a fog layer and allowed for about a 200 ft visibility. Between 1100 to 1200 PDT, he heard a low-level airplane flying; he added that the engine sounded as if it was running. However, he did not

hear the airplane impact terrain. He further reported that the fog was present for most of the morning all through the early afternoon.

Submitted by:

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