

National Transportation Safety Board

Office of Aviation Safety

Washington, DC 20594



WPR24FA287

ACCIDENT SITE AND WRECKAGE EXAMINATION SUMMARY REPORT

Factual Report

August 27, 2024

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A. ACCIDENT

Location: Santa Paula, California
Date: August 25, 2024
Time: 1224 Pacific Daylight Time
Airplane: Pitts S-1 (N42JF)

B. PARTICIPANTS

NTSB-IIC Andrew Swick
 NTSB AS-WPR
 Phoenix, Arizona

FAA-IIC Jeffrey Culligan
 FAA-FSDO
 Van Nuys, California

C. DETAILS OF THE EXAMINATION

1.0 Accident Site

The accident site was located in an irrigation storage facility about 1/3 mile east (249°) of runway 22 at SZP. The debris field was about 120 ft long and on a heading of about 30°. The airplane's initial impact point were two large wire baskets containing steel 12-inch irrigation fittings. Red paint transfer marks were found on the damaged wired baskets. Adjacent to the baskets was a section of a right wing tip fairing. In the immediate area were small portions of wing structure and wing fabric. The debris field continued over the top of multiple baskets and steel racks containing steel and aluminum irrigation pipes. Three 12-inch aluminum pipes showed impact damage and were partially covered in wet oil and dirt. These pipes were displaced from their original location from about 20 to 50 ft along the debris field. Red paint transfer marks were found on pipes and broken racks that were displaced throughout the debris field. Small sections of the airplane's internal wood wing structure were also found throughout the debris field. The right main landing gear, including the wheel hub, tire and a section of the wheel pant fairing, separated from the wreckage was found on the left side of the debris field.



Figure 1-Accident site, first identified point of contact (FIPC).



Figure 2-Accident site, debris field.

The main wreckage was found positioned sideways alongside two metal waste containers. Most of the main wreckage was consumed by postimpact fire.



Figure 3-Accident site, main wreckage.

Both wing forward and aft spars were mostly consumed by postimpact fire. Charred wood resembling the wing spars were noted alongside the main wreckage. Both Weldment I-Struts were found near the main wreckage. Wing streamlined tie rods were found for both wings and remained attached to portions of the charred wing spar sections. The right wing streamlined tie rods had impact damage. Internal wing round tie rods were found for both wings. The right side of the fuselage structure and remnants of the right wing were crushed between the containers and the fuselage. Aileron control rods, control arms, and bellcranks and both aileron inter-connect assemblies were found in the debris near the main wreckage. The bellcrank and control arm brackets were found attached to burned fragments of the wooden wing spar. The aileron control tubes remained attached to the control stick torque tube and separated from the aileron linkage at both outboard ends. The control stick moved freely with the torque tube assembly.

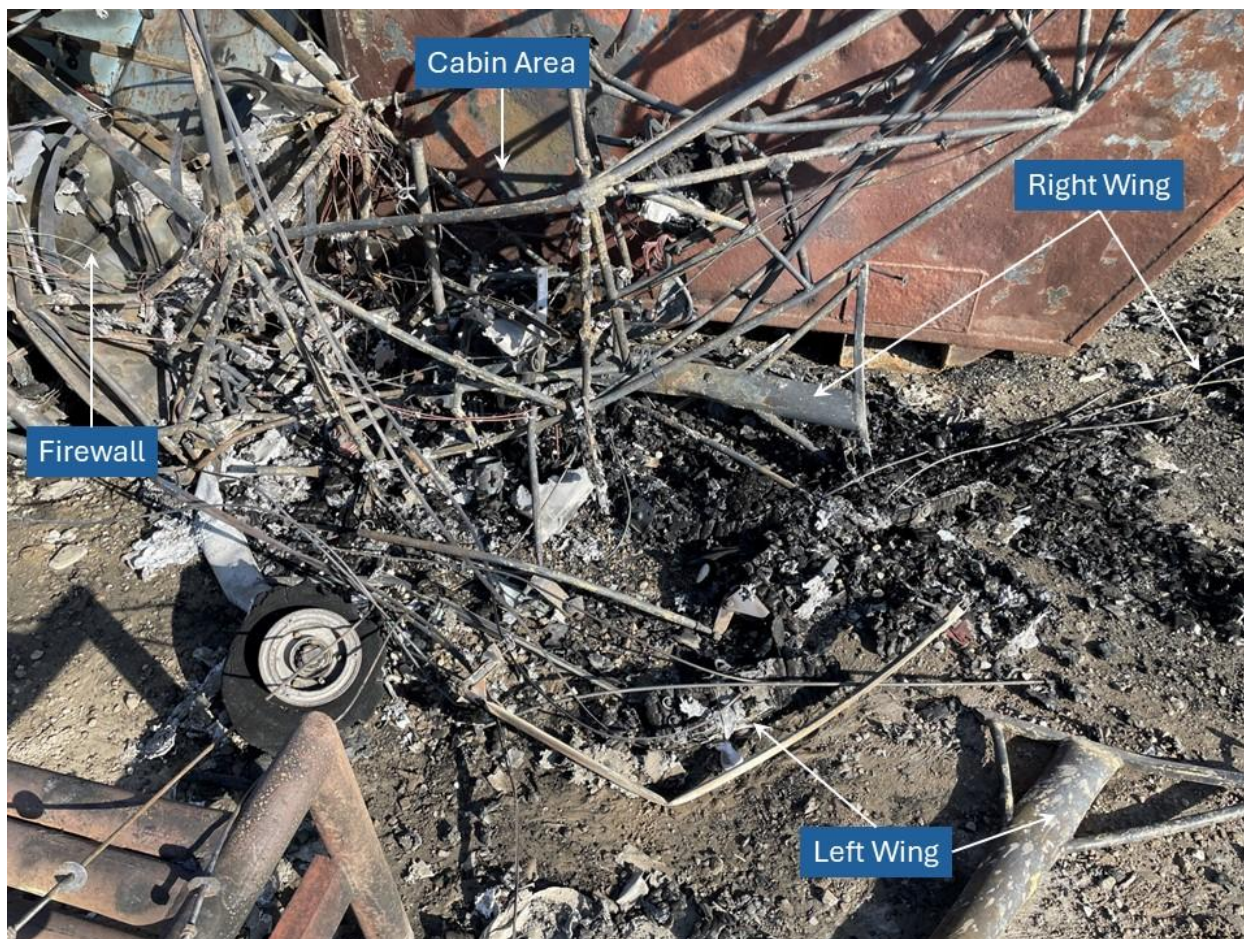


Figure 4-Accident site, wings and fuselage.

The empennage remained intact and had impact damage to several structural tubing locations. The tail wheel remained partially attached to the empennage. The rudder and vertical stabilizer structural tubing had impact damage and the rudder control cables remained secured to the rudder attach points. Rudder cable control continuity was established to the rudder pedal attach points in the cabin area. The elevators and horizontal stabilizers structural tubing had impact damage. Elevator control tube continuity was established from the elevator attach points to near the separation of the control tube at the aft side of the control stick torque tube. The elevator trim tab was found in the down position and control cable continuity was established to the cockpit control. The elevator trim control was loose from its cabin attachment.



Figure 5-Accident site, empennage.

The ferry tank located on the upper forward wing spar remained attached and had thermal damage. The tank was breached and had thermal damage. The tank cap was locked and remained attached to the tank and had thermal damage. The main tank was mostly consumed by post impact fire. Small fragments of melted aluminum were found near the steel bracket assembly that holds the tank. The main tank fuel cap was not found during the onsite examination. The smoke tank, forward of the right rudder pedal area, was consumed by postimpact fire.

The instrument panel was consumed by postimpact fire and thermally damaged instrument components were found in the floor area of the cabin area. No position information was gathered from any of the instruments. The throttle and mixture cables were found loose in the cabin area and cable continuity was established to the firewall.

The cabin restraint system fabric was melted in the cabin area. The ratchet and metal restraint components were identified in the debris.

The upper cowling remained partially attached to the engine and had impact and thermal damage. The lower cowling was not visible. The engine had an undetermined amount of impact damage to its lower side and an oil puddle was noted near the sump. The engine remained attached to the fuselage. The propeller

remained attached to the crankshaft flange and both blades were bent slightly aft. No rotational signatures were noted on the blades.

The left landing gear strut and wheel assembly remained attached to the main wreckage and had thermal damage.

The wreckage was recovered to a secured facility for further examination.

Submitted by:

Andrew Swick
Aviation Accident Investigator