

National Transportation Safety Board

Office of Aviation Safety

Washington, DC 20594



WPR25FA145

ACIDENT SITE EXAMINATION

April 30, 2025

TABLE OF CONTENTS

A. ACCIDENT	3
B. ACIDENT SITE EXAMINATION	3
C. SUMMARY	3
D. DETAILS OF THE INVESTIGATION	3
1.0 ACCIDENT SITE	3
2.0 AIRFRAME EXAMINATION	4
3.0 ENGINE EXAMINATION	8
4.0 PROPELLER EXAMINATION	9
5.0 AIRPORT INFORMATION	9
6.0 METEOROLOGICAL INFORMATION	10

A. ACCIDENT

Location: Cottonwood, California
Date: April 29, 2025
Time: 15:34 Pacific daylight time
Airplane: N6310N, Champion, 7ECA

B. ACCIDENT SITE EXAMINATION

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National Transportation Safety Board
Federal Way, Washington

FAA Inspector Robert Henson
Federal Aviation Administration
Sacramento, California

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Federal Aviation Administration
Sacramento, California

C. SUMMARY

On April 29, 2025, about 1534 Pacific daylight time, a Champion, 7ECA, N6310N, was destroyed when it was involved in an accident near Cottonwood, California. The flight instructor and pilot receiving instruction were fatally injured. The airplane was operated as a Title 14 *Code of Federal Regulations* Part 91 instructional flight.

D. DETAILS OF THE INVESTIGATION

1.0 Accident Site

Examination of the accident site revealed that the airplane impacted several trees and came to rest at a base of a tree about 585 ft south of the departure end of runway 16 at the Flying N Ranch Airport (CA04), Cottonwood, California. The first identified point of contact (FIPC) was a downed fence post located about 40 ft south of the departure end of the runway, aligned on an extended centerline. The downed fence post was about 5 ft in height and was separated at the base. The 5 ft tall downed fence post was separated at the base and exhibited a black transfer mark near the top of the post. The tree limbs of a 40 ft tree were damaged and about 380 ft south of the FIPC. The debris path was oriented along a heading of about 185° magnetic and was about 585 ft in length from the FIPC to the main wreckage. The fuselage came to rest on its left side in an approximate 10° nose low attitude, on a heading of about 310°

magnetic, at an elevation of 538 ft mean sea level (msl). The right wing and left main landing gear were separated from the fuselage and located about 5 to 10 ft. north of the main wreckage.



Figure 1: View of accident site diagram.

2.0 Airframe Examination

Visual examination of the fuselage revealed that it had come to rest on its left side and sustained thermal and impact damage. The instrument panel was thermal and impact damaged with instruments separated. The left main landing gear was separated from the fuselage and located in the debris path. Damage to the left brake rotor, consistent with impact damage, was observed. The right main landing gear remained attached to the fuselage, was bent aft and thermally damaged.

The instrument panel was thermal damaged with multiple instruments displaced. Flight controls were observed in both the forward and rear seat positions. The forward flight control had fracture separated at the torque tube attachment point. The rudder pedals were observed in the cockpit area with thermal damage. Flight control continuity was established from the cockpit controls to their respective flight control surfaces; separations of the flight control cables were consistent with overload.



Figure 2: Side view of accident airplane.



Figure 3: View of left main landing gear.

The left wing separated from the fuselage near the wing root and came to rest under the fuselage. The left wing and aileron were mostly destroyed by fire. The flight control cables remained within the left-wing structure and were traced from the aileron attach points to the center fuselage. The left-wing aluminum fuel tank was mostly destroyed by fire. Aluminum pooling was observed throughout the entire left-wing structure.



Figure 4: View of left wing.

The right wing separated from the fuselage near the wing root and was located about 5 to 10 ft north of the main wreckage. The right-wing aileron remained attached to the wing, via its attach points. The flight control cables separated from their attachment points and were located with the main wreckage, the separation in the flight control cables were consistent with overload. The right-wing aluminum fuel tank separated from the wing and was mostly destroyed by fire.



Figure 5: View of right wing.

The empennage remained attached to the fuselage and was thermal damaged throughout. The elevator and rudder remained attached to their respective attachment points. The elevator flight control cables remained attached to their respective mounts, the control cables were traced to the cockpit and were attached to the flight control torque tube. The rudder flight control cables remained attached to their respective mounts, the control cables were traced to cockpit, where they remained attached to the rudder pedals.



Figure 6: View of airplane empennage.

3.0 Engine Examination

Engine Manufacturer: Lycoming
Engine Model Number: O-235-C1
Engine Serial Number: L9043-15

The engine remained attached to the engine mount and fuselage. No damage was noted to the steel engine mount tubes. Thermal damage was observed throughout the engine from post impact fire. The engine was covered in burned fiberglass cowl remains which appeared to be draped over the engine area only.



Figure 7: Front view of airplane engine and propeller.

The carburetor remained attached to the engine; thermal damage was observed. The air intake from the cowl to the carburetor was separated and thermal damaged. Continuity of the throttle and mixture controls was established from the cockpit controls to the carburetor. The throttle and mixture cable lines were attached and secured to their respective attachment points. Damage to the throttle and mixture cockpit controls prevented full movement.

The airplane was equipped with an electronic and a legacy magneto. Both remained attached to the engine accessory case with extensive thermal damage .

4.0 Propeller Examination

Propeller Manufacturer: McCauley
Propeller Model Number: ALM7246
Propeller Serial Number: 50523

The airplane was equipped with a fixed pitch propeller. The propeller remained attached the crankshaft. One propeller blade exhibited damage to the propeller tip. The other propeller blade exhibited aft bending about mid span and the leading edge exhibited chipping, polishing, and chordwise striations.

5.0 Airport Information

The Flying N Ranch Airport, Cottonwood, California, is a private airport operating under class-Golf airspace. The airport features a grass runway, 16 & 34 and is charted as right traffic. The airport elevation is listed as 530 ft, and the runway dimensions are 2600 ft x 150 ft. According to the Federal Aviation Administration, "RESTRICTED FIELD. NOT RECOMMENDED FOR STUDENT USE."

Data Source: https://www.faa.gov/air_traffic/flight_info/aeronav/aero_data/ Print Date: 06/11/2025

1 ASSOC CITY:	COTTONWOOD	4 STATE: CA	LOC ID: CA04	FAA SITE NR:	01457.81'A
2 AIRPORT NAME:	FLYING N RANCH		5 COUNTY: TEHAMA, CA		
3 CBD TO AIRPORT (NM):	3 SW	6 REGION/ADO: AWP /SFO	7 SECT AERO CHT: KLAMATH FALLS		

GENERAL

10 OWNERSHIP: PRIVATE
11 OWNER: JAMES & PEGGY NEWMAYER
12 ADDRESS: 18775 LAUREL WAY
COTTONWOOD, CA 96022
(530) 347-7112
13 PHONE NR:
14 MANAGER:
15 ADDRESS:

16 PHONE NR:

17 ATTENDANCE SCHEDULE:

MONTHS	DAYS	HOURS
ALL	ALL	ALL

18 AIRPORT USE:	PRIVATE
19 ARPT LAT:	40-20-46.551N ESTIMATED
20 ARPT LONG:	122-20-20.014W
21 ARPT ELEV:	530.0 ESTIMATED
22 ACREAGE:	0
23 RIGHT TRAFFIC:	16 34
24 NON-COMM LANDING:	NO
25 NPAS/FED AGREEMENTS:	
26 FAR 139 INDEX:	/

SERVICES

70 FUEL:
71 AIRFRAME RPRS: NONE
72 PWR PLANT RPRS: NONE
73 BOTTLE OXYGEN:
74 BULK OXYGEN:
75 TSNT STORAGE:
76 OTHER SERVICES:

BASED AIRCRAFT

Source: Self-reported	
90 SINGLE ENG:	5
91 MULTI ENG:	
92 JET:	
93 HELICOPTERS:	
TOTAL:	5
94 GLIDERS:	
95 MILITARY:	
96 ULTRA-LIGHT:	
VTOL:	

FACILITIES:

80 ARPT BCN:
81 ARPT LGT SKED:
BCN LGT SKED:
82 UNICOM:
83 WIND INDICATOR: YES
84 SEGMENTED CIRCLE: NONE
85 CONTROL TWR: NO
86 FSS: RANCHO MURIETA
87 FSS ON ARPT: NO
88 FSS PHONE NR:
89 TOLL FREE NR: 1-800-WX-BRIEF

OPERATIONS

Information on aircraft operations is available from FAA's Aviation System Performance Metrics <https://aspm.faa.gov>

RUNWAY DATA

30 RUNWAY IDENT:	18/34
31 LENGTH:	2,600
32 WIDTH:	150
33 SURF TYPE-COND:	TURF-
34 SURF TREATMENT:	NONE
35 GROSS WT:	8
36 (IN THSDS)	0
37	20
38	20/2DS
39 PCN / PCR:	

LIGHTING/APCH AIDS

40 EDGE INTENSITY:	
42 RWY MARK TYPE-COND:	-/-
43 VGS:	/
44 THR CROSSING HGT:	/
45 VISUAL GLIDE ANGLE:	/
46 CNTRLN-TDZ:	-/-
47 RVR-RVV:	-/-
48 REIL:	/
49 APCH LIGHTS:	/

OBSTRUCTION DATA

50 FAR 77 CATEGORY:	A(V) / A(V)
51 DISPLACED THR:	/
52 CTLG OBSTN:	TREES /
53 OBSTN MARKED/LGTD:	/
54 HGT ABOVE RWY END:	50 /
55 DIST FROM RWY END:	0 / 0
56 CNTRLN OFFSET:	/
57 OBSTN CLNC SLOPE:	/
58 CLOSE-IN OBSTN:	N / N

DECLARED DISTANCES:

60 TAKE OFF RUN AVBL (TORA):
61 TAKE OFF DIST AVBL (TODA):
62 ACFT STOP DIST AVBL (ASDA):
63 LNDG DIST AVBL (LDA):

110 REMARKS:

A 110-001 RESTRICTED FIELD,NOT RECOMMENDED FOR STUDENT USE.
A 110-002 FOR CD CTC OAKLAND ARTCC AT 510-745-3380.

111 INSPECTOR: (N)	112 LAST INSP:	113 LAST INFO RES:	06/15/2020
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WPR25FA145
PG 10 OF 11

At 1454, the automated weather observation station at KRBL reported wind from 290° at 4 knots, visibility 10 statute miles, clear, temperature 29°C, dew point 4°C, and an altimeter setting of 29.98 inches of mercury.

Submitted by:

Eric M. Gutierrez
Air Safety Investigator