NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
PILOT/OPERATOR AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT/INCIDENT REPORT
This form to be used for reporting civil and public use aircraft accidents and incidents

BASIC INFORMATION

Accident/Incident Location
Nearest City/Place: Travelers Rest State: SC
ZIP: 29690 Country: US
Latitude: 35° 3'54" (dd:mm:ss N/S) Longitude: 82° 25' 57" (dd:mm:ss E/W)

Date/Time
Date: 12/03/2013 (mm/dd/yyyy) Local Time: 17:50
Time Zone: EST

Phase of Operation
- ☐ Standing
- ☐ Taxi
- ☒ Descent
- ☐ Takeoff (incl. initial climb)
- ☐ Climb
- ☐ Landing
- ☐ Cruise
- ☐ Maneuvering
- ☐ Approach
- ☐ Hover
- ☐ Other
- ☐ Unknown

Collision with Other Aircraft
- ☐ Midair
- ☐ On-ground
- ☒ None

Altitude of In-Flight Occurrence
2756 ft MSL

AIRCRAFT INFORMATION

Manufacturer: Anderson - Rans
Model: S-6S Coyote
Serial Number: 09071827
Registration Number: N581TC **Amateur-built:** ☒ Yes ☐ No

Max Gross Weight: 1320 lbs
Weight at Time of Accident/Incident: 1065 lbs
Location of Center of Gravity at Time of Accident/Incident:
67.83 inches from ☐ nose or ☒ datum
-or- _____ Percent Mean Aerodynamic Cord (% MAC)

Category of Aircraft
- ☒ Airplane
- ☐ Balloon
- ☐ Blimp/Dirigible
- ☐ Glider
- ☐ Gyrocraft
- ☐ Helicopter
- ☐ Powered lift
- ☐ Ultralight
- ☐ Unknown

Type of Airworthiness Certificate *(Check all that apply)*

Standard
- ☐ Normal
- ☐ Utility
- ☐ Acrobatic
- ☐ Transport

Special
- ☐ Restricted
- ☐ Limited
- ☐ Provisional
- ☒ Experimental
- ☐ Special Flight
- ☒ Light Sport

Number of Seats: 2
If Large Aircraft, how many seats for:
Flight Crew: _____
Cabin Crew: _____
Passengers: _____

Landing Gear ☐ Retractable
Check any additional landing gear configuration that applies:
- ☐ Tricycle
- ☒ Tailwheel
- ☐ Amphibian
- ☐ Emergency Float
- ☐ Float
- ☐ Hull
- ☐ Unknown
- ☐ High Skid
- ☐ Skid
- ☐ Ski
- ☐ Ski/Wheel

Type of Maintenance Program
- ☐ Annual
- ☒ Conditional (Amateur-built only)
- ☐ Manufacturer's Inspection Program
- ☐ Other Approved Inspection Program (AAIP)
- ☐ Continuous Airworthiness
- ☐ Other, specify: _____

Last Inspection Type
- ☐ 100 Hour
- ☐ AAIP
- ☐ Annual
- ☐ Continuous Airworthiness
- ☒ Conditional Inspection
- ☐ Unknown

Date Last Inspection: 10/21/2013 (mm/dd/yyyy)

Airframe Total Time: 840.7 hrs
hours measured at *(check one)*
☒ Last Inspection ☐ Time of Accident/Incident

IFR Equipped
☐ Yes ☒ No ☐ Unknown

Stall Warning System Installed
☐ Yes ☒ No ☐ Unknown

Type of Fire Extinguishing System
☐ None
☒ Specify Hand-held extinguisher

ELT Installed ☒ Yes ☐ No
ELT Activated ☒ Yes ☐ No
ELT Aided in Locating Accident/Incident ☐ Yes ☒ No

ELT Manufacturer: Artex
Model/Series: ME 406
Serial Number: 00530
Battery Type: LiSO2 **Battery Exp. Date:** 03/2015

Engine Type
- ☒ Reciprocating
- ☐ Turbo Shaft
- ☐ Turbo Prop
- ☐ Turbo Jet
- ☐ Turbo Fan
- ☐ Unknown

Reciprocating Fuel System Type
- ☒ Carburetor
- ☐ Fuel Injected

Propeller
- ☒ Fixed Pitch
- ☐ Controllable Pitch

Manufacturer: Warp Drive
Model: 68", 3 blade, ground adjustable

Engine	Engine Manufacturer	Engine Model/Series	Manufacturer's Serial Number	Date of Mfg. (mm/dd/yyyy)	Engine Rated Power Measured as (check one) ☒ Horsepower or ☐ lbs of Thrust	Total Time (hours)	Time Since Inspection (hours)	Time Since Overhaul (hours)
Eng. 1	Rotax	912 ULS	5649254		100	644.3	84.7	NA
Eng. 2								
Eng. 3								
Eng. 4								

OWNER/OPERATOR INFORMATION

Registered Aircraft Owner
Name: Andreas Anderson
Fractional Ownership Aircraft: ☐ Yes ☒ No

Owner Address
City: Merced
State: CA ZIP: 95348
Country: US

Operator of Aircraft ☐ Same As Registered Owner
Name: William Griffin Anderson
Doing Business As: NA
Air Carrier/Operator Designator (4 Character Code): _____

Operator Address ☐ Same As Registered Owner
City: Waedenswil
State: _____ ZIP: 8820
Country: Switzerland

Regulation Flight Conducted Under
☒ FAR 91 ☐ FAR 129 ☐ FAR 91 Special Flight ☐ Public Use (select type)
☐ FAR 103 ☐ FAR 133 ☐ Non-US, Commercial ☐ *Federal* ☐ *State* ☐ *Local*
☐ FAR 121 ☐ FAR 135 ☐ Non-US, Non-commercial ☐ Unknown
☐ FAR 125 ☐ FAR 137 ☐ Armed Forces

Revenue Sightseeing Flight
☐ Yes ☒ No

Air Medical Flight
☐ Yes ☒ No

Purpose of Flight
for FAR 91, 103, 133, 137 *(Select one)*
☒ Personal
☐ Business
☐ Executive/Corporate
☐ Other Work Use
☐ Instructional
☐ Ferry
☐ Positioning
☐ Aerial Application
☐ Aerial Observation
☐ Air Drop
☐ Air Race / Show
☐ Flight Test
☐ Public Use
☐ Unknown

Revenue Operation
for FAR 121, 125, 129, 135 *(Select one)*
☐ Scheduled or Commuter
☐ Non-Scheduled or Air Taxi

Domestic or International
☐ Domestic ☐ International

Cargo Operation
☐ Passenger/Cargo
☐ Passenger _____ How many?
☐ Cargo _____ lbs
☐ Mail

Type of Commercial Operating Certificate Held
(Check all that apply)
☒ None
☐ Flag Carrier Operating Certificate (121)
☐ Supplemental
☐ Air Cargo
☐ Foreign Air Carriers (129)
☐ Commuter Air Carrier (135)
☐ On-Demand Air Taxi (135)
☐ Large Helicopter (127)
☐ Rotorcraft External Load (133)
- or -
☐ Agricultural Aircraft (137)
☐ Other Operator of Large Aircraft

OTHER AIRCRAFT – COLLISION (If air or ground collision occurred, complete this section for *other* aircraft)

Aircraft Registration Number _____
Manufacturer: _____
Model: _____
Damage to Other Aircraft
☐ Destroyed ☐ Minor
☐ Substantial ☐ None

Registered Owner of Other Aircraft
First Name: _____
Middle Initial: _____
Last Name: _____
City: _____
State: _____ ZIP: _____
Country: _____

Pilot of Other Aircraft
First Name: _____
Middle Initial: _____
Last Name: _____
City: _____
State: _____ ZIP: _____
Country: _____

MECHANICAL MALFUNCTION/FAILURE (If more space is needed, continue on separate sheet)

Was there Mechanical Malfunction/Failure? ☐ Yes ☒ No ☐ Unknown
(If yes, list the name of the part, manufacturer, part no., serial no., and describe the failure.)

Total Time/Cycles On Part
_____ Hours
_____ Cycles

Time Since This Part Inspected/Overhauled
_____ Hours

DAMAGE TO AIRCRAFT AND OTHER PROPERTY

Aircraft Damage
☐ None ☐ Substantial
☐ Minor ☒ Destroyed

Aircraft Fire
☒ None ☐ Both Ground and In-Flight
☐ In-Flight ☐ Unknown Origin
☐ On-Ground

Aircraft Explosion
☒ None ☐ Both Ground and In-Flight
☐ In-Flight ☐ Unknown Origin
☐ On-Ground

Description of Damage to Aircraft and Other Property *(use additional sheet if necessary)*

Aircraft: destroyed
Forest: 3-4 trees, 8-10 in diameter, broken at 10-12 ft above ground

AIRPORT INFORMATION (If the accident/incident occurred on approach, takeoff or within 3 miles of an airport, complete this section)

Airport Identifier: _____ **Distance From Airport Center:** _____ SM

Airport Name: _____ **Direction From Airport:** _____ degrees MAG

Proximity to Airport ☐ Off Airport/Airstrip ☐ On Airport ☐ On Airstrip **Airport Elevation:** _____ ft. MSL

Approach Segment *(Select one)*

☐ On Instrument Approach ☐ Landing ☐ Base leg ☐ Final ☐ Go Around
☐ Crosswind ☐ Downwind ☐ Low Approach ☐ Aborted Landing (after touchdown)

IFR Approach *(Check all that apply)*

☐ None ☐ PAR ☐ MLS ☐ Practice
☐ ADF/NDB ☐ Sidestep ☐ LDA ☐ GPS
☐ SDF ☐ ILS ☐ ASR ☐ Loran
☐ VOR/TVOR ☐ Localizer Only ☐ Visual ☐ Unknown
☐ VOR/DME ☐ LOC-back course ☐ Contact
☐ TACAN ☐ RNAV ☐ Circling

VFR Approach *(Check all that apply)*

☐ None ☐ Stop and Go
☐ Traffic Pattern ☐ Touch and Go
☐ Straight-In ☐ Simulated Forced Landing
☐ Valley/Terrain Following ☐ Forced Landing
☐ Go Around ☐ Precautionary Landing
☐ Full Stop ☐ Unknown

Runway Information

Runway ID: _____ (L/R/C) Length: _____ ft Width: _____ ft

Runway/Landing Surface *(Check all that apply)*

☐ Asphalt ☐ Grass/Turf ☐ Macadam ☐ Water
☐ Concrete ☐ Gravel ☐ Metal/Wood ☐ Unknown
☐ Dirt ☐ Ice ☐ Snow

Condition of Runway/Landing Surface *(Check all that apply)*

☐ Dry ☐ Snow-Compacted ☐ Water-Calm
☐ Holes ☐ Snow-Crusted ☐ Water-Choppy
☐ Ice Covered ☐ Snow-Dry ☐ Water-Glassy
☐ Rough ☐ Snow-Wet ☐ Wet
☐ Rubber Deposits ☐ Soft ☐ Unknown
☐ Slush Covered ☐ Vegetation

FLIGHT ITINERARY INFORMATION

Last Departure Point

Airport ID: KSRB
City: Sparta
State: TN
Country: US

Time of Departure

Time: 15:15 (est.)
Time Zone: EST

Destination

Airport ID: KGMU
City: Greenville
State: SC
Country: US

Type Flight Plan Filed

☒ None ☐ VFR/IFR
☐ Company VFR ☐ IFR
☐ Military VFR ☐ Unknown
☐ VFR

Activated? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Type of ATC Clearance/Service *(Check all that apply)*

☒ None ☐ Special VFR ☐ Special IFR ☐ VFR Flight Following ☐ Cruise
☐ VFR ☐ IFR ☐ VFR On Top ☐ Traffic Advisory ☐ Unknown / NA

Airspace where the accident/incident occurred *(Check all that apply)*

☐ Class A ☐ Class E ☐ Prohibited Area ☐ Jet Training Area ☐ Special
☐ Class B ☒ Class G ☐ Restricted Area ☐ TRSA ☐ Air Traffic Control Area
☐ Class C ☐ Demo Area ☐ Military Operations Area (MOA) ☐ FAR 93 ☐ Unknown
☐ Class D ☐ Warning Area ☐ Airport Advisory Area

Aircraft Load Description *(Check all that apply)*

☒ None ☐ Towing Glider ☐ Parachutists ☐ Livestock
☐ Passengers ☐ Towing Banner ☐ Water ☐ Unknown
☐ Cargo ☐ Other External ☐ Chemical/Fertilizer/Seeds

FUEL & SERVICES INFORMATION

Fuel on Board at Last Takeoff
(convert from pounds, as necessary)

19.95 Gallons

Fuel Type

☐ 80/87 ☐ 115/145 ☐ JP3 ☐ Other, specify _____
☐ 100 Low Lead ☐ Jet A ☐ JP4
☐ 100/130 ☒ Automotive ☐ JP5

Other Services, if Any, Prior to Departure

EVACUATION OF AIRCRAFT

Was an emergency evacuation of the aircraft performed? ☐ Yes ☒ No

Method of Exit – Describe how the occupants exited and how many occupants evacuated each location

The aircraft was lying on its left side, rendering the doors unusable. The single pilot exited through the skylight, whose Lexan glazing had become detached in the crash.

WEATHER INFORMATION AT THE ACCIDENT/INCIDENT SITE -- see separate sheet (6a)

Weather Observation Facility
Facility ID: KAVL
Observation Time: 17:54
Time Zone: EST
Distance from Accident Site: 16.75 NM
Direction from Accident Site: 162 degrees MAG

Source of Weather Information *(Check all that apply)*
☒ National Weather Service
☐ Flight Service Station
☐ TV/Radio
☐ Automated Report
☐ Commercial Weather Service (DUATS)
☐ Company
☐ Military
☐ Internet
☐ Unknown

Method of Briefing *(Check all that apply)*
☐ In Person
☐ Teletype
☒ Telephone/Computer
☒ Aircraft Radio
☐ TV/Radio
☐ Unknown

Briefing Type/Completeness
☐ Full
☐ Partial / Limited By Pilot
☐ Partial / Limited By Briefer
☐ Abbreviated
☐ Unknown
☒ Not Pertinent

Light Condition
☐ Dawn
☒ Dusk
☐ Day
☐ Night
☐ Dark Night
☐ Bright Night
☐ Not Reported

Visibility
0 miles

Sky/Lowest Cloud Condition
☐ Clear
☐ Few
☐ Partial Obscuration
☐ Scattered
☐ Thin Broken
☐ Thin Overcast
☐ Unknown

Ceiling
☐ None (clear)
☐ Broken
☐ Overcast
☒ Obscured
☐ Indefinite
☐ Unknown

Restriction to Visibility *(Check all that apply)*
☐ None
☐ Blowing Dust
☐ Blowing Sand
☐ Blowing Snow
☐ Blowing Spray
☐ Dust
☒ Fog
☒ Ground Fog
☐ Haze
☐ Ice Fog
☐ Smoke
☐ Unknown

Lowest Cloud Condition Height
0 ft AGL

Ceiling Height
0 ft AGL

Wind Direction
☐ Indicated: _____ degrees MAG
☐ Variable

Wind Speed
Velocity: _____ KTS
-or-
☒ Calm
☐ Light and Variable

Wind Gusts
Velocity: _____ KTS
☐ Gusting
☒ Not Gusting

Type of Turbulence *(Check all that apply)*
☒ None
☐ Clear Air
☐ In Clouds
☐ Vicinity of Thunderstorm

Severity of Turbulence
☐ Extreme
☐ Severe
☐ Moderate
☐ Moderate Chop
☐ Light

NOTAMs (D, L and FDC), AIRMETs, SIGMETs, PIREPs in effect at the time of the accident/incident

Temperature: _____ (C)
or _____ (F)

Altimeter Setting: _____ in. HG
or _____ MB

Density Altitude: _____ ft

Dew Point: _____ (C)
or _____ (F)

Icing Forecast
Amount
☒ None
☐ Trace
☐ Light
☐ Moderate
☐ Severe
Type
☐ Rime
☐ Clear
☐ Mixed

Icing Actual
Amount
☒ None
☐ Trace
☐ Light
☐ Moderate
☐ Severe
Type
☐ Rime
☐ Clear
☐ Mixed

Type of Precipitation *(Check all that apply)*
☒ None
☐ Rain
☐ Snow
☐ Hail
☐ Rain Showers
☐ Freezing Rain
☐ Snow Shower
☐ Drizzle
☐ Ice Pellets
☐ Snow Pellets
☐ Snow Grains
☐ Ice Crystals
☐ Ice Pellets Shower
☐ Freezing Drizzle

Intensity of Precipitation
☐ Light ☐ Moderate ☐ Heavy

PILOT "A" INFORMATION

Pilot "A" Responsibilities at the Time of Accident/Incident

☒ Pilot ☐ Co-Pilot ☐ Student Pilot ☐ Flight Instructor ☐ Check Pilot ☐ Flight Engineer ☐ Other Flight Crew

Pilot "A" Identification

First Name: William
Middle Initial: G
Last Name: Anderson

City: Waedenswil
State: —
ZIP: 8820
Country: Switzerland

Age at time of Accident/Incident: 66 Date of Birth: [redacted]/1947 (mm/dd/yyyy) Certificate Number: [redacted]

Degree of Injury	Seat Occupied	Seat Belt	Shoulder Harness
☐ None ☐ Fatal	☒ Left ☐ Front ☐ Unknown	Used ☒ Yes ☐ No	Used ☒ Yes ☐ No
☒ Minor ☐ Unknown	☐ Right ☐ Rear	Available ☐ Yes ☐ No	Available ☐ Yes ☐ No
☐ Serious	☐ Center ☐ Single		

Pilot Certificate(s) *(Check all that apply)*

☐ None ☐ Student ☐ Recreational ☐ Commercial ☐ Flight Engineer ☐ Foreign
☒ Private ☐ Flight Instructor ☒ Sport ☐ Airline Transport ☐ U.S. Military

Principal Occupation	Medical Certificate	Medical Certificate Validity	Date of Last Medical
☐ Pilot	☐ None ☒ Class 3	☐ Without limitations/waivers	06/11/2012
☒ Other	☐ Class 1 ☐ Driver's License (Sport Pilot only)	☒ With limitations/waivers	(mm/dd/yyyy)
☐ Unknown	☐ Class 2 ☐ Unknown	☐ Unknown	

Medical Certificate Limitations

MUST WEAR CORRECTIVE LENSES FOR NEAR AND DISTANT VISION

Medical Certificate Waivers

Date of Last Flight Review or Equivalent, Including FAR 121/135 Checks: 06/27/2012 (mm/dd/yyyy)

Flight Review Aircraft
Make: Anderson - Rans
Model: S-65

Airplane Rating(s) *(Check all that apply)*	Other Aircraft Rating(s) *(Check all that apply)*	Instrument Rating(s) *(Check all that apply)*	Instructor Rating(s) *(Check all that apply)*
☐ None	☒ None	☒ None	☒ None
☒ Single-Engine Land	☐ Airship	☐ Airplane	☐ Airplane Single-Engine
☐ Single-Engine Sea	☐ Free Balloon	☐ Helicopter	☐ Airplane Multi-Engine
☐ Multiengine Land	☐ Glider	☐ Powered Lift	☐ Gyroplane
☐ Multiengine Sea	☐ Gyroplane		☐ Powered Lift
	☐ Helicopter		☐ Instrument Airplane
	☐ Powered Lift		☐ Instrument Helicopter
			☐ Helicopter
			☐ Glider
			☐ Sport

Type Ratings

Student Endorsements *(Include dates)*

Flight Time *(enter appropriate number of hours in each box)*	All Aircraft	This Make & Model	Airplane Single Engine	Airplane Multiengine	Night	Instrument: Actual	Instrument: Simulated	Rotorcraft	Glider	Lighter Than Air
Total Time	745	712	745	—	15 (est)		3	—	—	—
Pilot in Command (PIC)	700 (est)	685 (est)	700 (est)	—				—	—	—
Time as Instructor	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
This Make/Model					15 (est)		3			
Last 90 Days	84.7	84.7	84.7	—	2.8			—	—	—
Last 30 Days	51.3	51.3	51.3	—	1.3			—	—	—
Last 24 Hours	3.5	3.5	3.5	—	0			—	—	—

see note, p. 11

Weather information on p. 6 reflects observations made by me at the accident site. KAVL, the nearest airport, reported weather as follows:

KAVL Dec 3, 17:54 EST (almost the precise instant of the crash): wind SSE at 6 kn; visibility 10 SM; ceiling overcast, 1900 ft; temp. 52°, dew point 47°; altimeter 29.90

I was unable to discover a source for the retrieval of historical AIRMETS, SIGMETS, etc.

As this accident occurred due to weather and to the decisions made in response to it, I would thus like to enlarge upon this topic.

The goal of the trip was to reach KGMU (Greenville, SC) on or before December 5 in order to hangar N581TC in time for me to return to my home on an evening commercial flight. At the time of the accident, I still had 1½ flying days to reach KGMU. The weather was not good, and was not expected to improve notably. On the evening of December 2, I telephoned a cousin, a pilot residing in Greenville, and discussed the weather and alternative strategies in the event I could not make KGMU on time for my commercial flight. We arranged that I could leave the plane anywhere between Nashville and Greenville -- the closer, the better, of course -- and continue in a rental car, and that my cousin would retrieve the plane later. We thought I might get as far as KAVL (Asheville, NC); we both considered it unlikely that I would get into KGMU. This plan, which relieved me of any necessity of completing the trip by a given deadline, was consciously made to combat "get-there-itis".

On the morning of December 3, the ceiling at KJWN was below minimums, and I spent my time impatiently checking the weather on the airport computer. An AIRMET was in effect as far as the Appalachians, but most stations were reporting MVFR, and a deviation to the NE -- hopefully not as far as VA -- would put me into VFR conditions. As I did not expect to get into Greenville, I gave only cursory consideration to that area.

A flight that day may not have been advisable for most VFR aircraft, which typically fly at altitudes measured in thousands of feet, at speeds of 130 kt or more. In N581TC, however, at 65-70 kn (3.5 GPH), and with a turn radius of only 200-300 ft, I felt secure under ceilings of 1800-2000 ft despite hazy conditions. Aided by a Bendix-King AV8OR with terrain-relevant display, I kept a sharp lookout for obstructions as I flew around Nashville to the north. Further on, the terrain became hilly, and I made the rule for myself that I would only proceed if I could clearly see the ridgeline of the hill I was approaching *and* the one beyond it.

Continuing toward Crossville, TN, this condition no longer obtained, and I returned to KSRB (Sparta, TN), which I had overflown shortly before, to check weather. I decided to deviate NE: there was some terrain in that direction, but the weather looked better.

A remarkably sharp-eyed person at the airport saw my watch and remarked that "We are on Central Time." I replied that I knew that, but that I had already set my watch to EST so as not to be surprised by nightfall. (The reader may judge the effectiveness of that measure on the basis of later events.)

Continuing under generally improving visibility, I nonetheless encountered a ridge whose top was embedded in thick, well-defined cloud. I could not cross this ridge, and thought for a moment I would have to go back. However, the end of the ridge was near, as shown on the terrain-relative GPS, and I flew

through a gap, a few miles to the north of KJAU (Jacksboro, TN). If the weather was going to be nearly as bad farther E, I needed another weather check. I tuned the KJAU ASOS and was looking for the airport in preparation to landing when I noticed that the weather over the Tennessee Valley was, in fact, much better than I had passed through farther W. I tuned the CTAF at KMOR (Morristown, TN), on the eastern side of the valley, and heard a lot of pattern chatter as students flew their approaches; and the ASOS there reported a ceiling of 7000 ft, far above the terrain between me and KAVL, the most optimistic destination I had discussed with my cousin the evening before!

Cruise-climbing across the valley, I found myself at a VFR altitude of 9500 ft, above a broken layer ataround 8000 ft. There was no lack of ground references. Particularly the Interstate with its surprisingly heavy truck traffic was a fascinating feature: whenever I looked down, there was the Interstate! The GPS display was black: terrain no factor. The sun was getting low, but the clouds at that altitude were brilliantly lit, the sky was clear, the air smooth and serene. After he haze and cloud, I was elated. I thought at the time -- this is not a sentiment tacked on in retrospect -- that these were some of the most glorious moments I had ever experienced in aviation. I tuned the KAVL ATIS, but had not yet started receiving it when an idea struck me. I entered KGMU into the GPS: it showed that I was less than 40 minutes away. I retuned to the KGMU ASOS and Spartanburg Approach; I couldn't receive them, either, but they would come up as soon as they were within range, and doing it now would save a lot of frequency-fumbling later on. I didn't *need* the KAVL weather: I was *there* and I could *see* what was going on.

SSE of KAVL, I picked a random hole in the broken layer and descended. I was so close to KGMU that the terrain must have flattened out, I thought. (The terrain-relative display was still black, remember. Remember, too, that though it is easy to see what is under a hole when you are atop it looking straight down, for a hole still off the nose -- one you are planning to descend into -- the view is limited.)

The terrain was still mountainous -- fairly high ones -- and the Interstate, of course. The terrain was clearly visible; no problem with insufficient ceiling, no obscuration, and it was still light. However, I elected to climb back on top because I thought it would be safer to descend over the flatlands. I assumed -- incorrectly, as it turns out -- that the broken layer with a generous ceiling would continue to the vicinity of KGMU.

And I repeated this procedure a second time. Still mountains. I was somewhat exasperated: I was less than 30 minutes from KGMU, and still over terrain! Again, I climbed back on top.

(An examination of a radar plot of the flight should clearly show these two controlled descents of 1500-2000 ft, followed by the much more random flight path of what was to come.)

Now, even at altitude, most of the clouds were turning gray. It was clear that I should not delay my descent much longer. Again, I chose a hole and descended. Below this hole, however, I encountered further clouds. I maneuvered around them, expecting to break out at any instant, but clear air got scarcer and I was soon in IMC. Visibility remained zero until the accident. The cloud was quite thick and -- once on the ground -- the fog was quite heavy; I did not know that I was going to crash until I had. At the crash site, the weather was calm, with comfortable temperatures and no precipitation though an intermittent light drizzle began later. Though it was dusky, it was not yet dark despite the fog. I would guess that I had perhaps twenty minutes to a half-hour before black night set in.

NARRATIVE HISTORY OF FLIGHT (Please type or print in ink)

Describe what occurred in chronological order, including circumstances leading to and nature of accident/incident. Describe terrain and include wreckage distribution sketch if pertinent. Attach extra sheets if needed. State time and point of departure, intended destination, and services obtained.

My flight originated at John Tune Airport (KJWN, near Nashville, TN): the destination was Greenville Downtown Airport (KGMU, in Greenville, SC). I, the pilot, flew alone. The accident occurred during the descent phase, less than 30 minutes from KGMU. The initial phases of the flight were under marginal VFR conditions, but entering the Tennessee Valley, I found conditions markedly improved: the Morristown, TN (KMOR) ASOS reported a 7000 ft ceiling. Climbing to clear the anticipated terrain, I flew SE to overhead I40, then turned SSE on course for KGMU, keeping the airspace of Asheville, NC (KAVL) to my left. Flying at a VFR altitude of 9500 MSL, in still air above a thin, broken layer at approx. 8000 MSL, I had frequent sight of the ground. Continuing on course, I twice descended below the broken layer but, looking at the terrain from lower down, twice chose to go back on top: though visibility and ceiling were acceptable, I considered it safer to descend over the lowlands near Greenville. Letting down through a third break in the cloud layer, I encountered further clouds. I maneuvered around these, expecting to break out at any instant, but clear air got scarcer and I was soon in IMC. Visibility remained zero until the accident. With no ground reference, I found it difficult to control the aircraft, though training and experience suggest that I should have been able to do so. I did maintain a degree of control, but this task demanded my full attention to the detriment of navigation. I ultimately crashed into a wooded slope, evidently at a shallow angle and low speed. The aircraft encountered the trees, diameter 8-10 in, at a height of 10-12 ft: these caused great destruction to the wings and firewall-forward areas of the aircraft while leaving the welded-tube crew compartment largely undeformed, allowing me to escape with minor injuries.

RECOMMENDATION (How could this accident/incident have been prevented?)

Operator/Owner Safety Recommendation

With onboard WX, I would not have been tempted to fly to KGMU if I knew that it would be difficult to get in there. Or I might have chosen an alternate with acceptable weather further east and remained on top longer.

More / recurrent training in IMC may have helped avoid the accident. My current assumption is that maneuvering while trying to avoid entering IMC set me up for the vertigo experienced when this indeed happened. Training -- conceivably as part of a BFR -- might include maneuvering and recovery from unusual attitudes. Encouraging pilots to maintain these skills through regular training under the hood might help. If I had been able to maintain coordinated flight without difficulty, I could have devoted more attention to the GPS / moving map (navigation); arguably I could have reached flatter terrain near KGMU, where there was a 1600-ft ceiling at the time, or, if the GPS terrain display lit up in the fog, clawed my way back on top and gone in to KAVL.

Pilots could be furnished with more specific examples of all the things it takes to be "ahead of the aircraft". In my case, it means not only knowing the time of sunset and twilight as a figure, but also looking at brilliant sunlight at altitude and factoring in not only time, but cloud cover lower down, plus a margin for unexpected weather. I might normally continue a flight that had to be completed after dark; but I need to be aware that combinations of night and weather, for example, though manageable individually, can pose problems when combined.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION *(Please type or print in ink)*

Use this space if additional space is needed for any answers.

Note to p. 7 Flight Times:
I have since the accident been unable to locate my logbook. The recent times, taken from my rough log are completely accurate. Older data for some categories (night, PIC) could only be estimated as they were only recorded in the missing fair-copy log.

Note to pp. 8-9:
Not included, as not applicable

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THE ABOVE INFORMATION IS COMPLETE AND ACCURATE TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE

Date of this Report	Signature and Name of [redacted]
01/03/2014 (mm/dd/yyyy)	Signature: [redacted]
	Type or Print Name: William Griffin Anderson

Signature and Name of Person Filing Report if Other than Pilot/Operator

Signature: _____

Type or Print Name: _____

Title: _____

FOR NTSB USE ONLY

NTSB Accident/Incident No.	Reviewed by NTSB Regional Office	Name of Investigator	Date Report Received
ERA14CA062	ERA	Murray	1/3/14