



NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

Office of Aviation Safety
Western Pacific Region

January 5, 2020

ACCIDENT SITE EXAMINATION

WPR20FA057

This document contains 2 embedded photos.

A. ACCIDENT

Location: Santa Clarita, CA
Date: January 4, 2020
Aircraft: N151WR Amateur-built
experimental TM-1
Thunder Mustang
NTSB IIC: Albert Nixon

B. EXAMINATION PARTICIPANTS:

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

Cotry Shearrill
Aviation Safety Inspector
Federal Aviation Administration
Van Nuys, CA

C. SUMMARY

D. DETAILS OF THE INVESTIGATION

1.0 Accident Site Examination

Examination of the accident site revealed that the airplane impacted level terrain in a median located in the center of an interstate freeway exit ramp. The terrain consisted of grass and dirt. On the east side of the median several tall trees were present. The first point of impact was near the top of about a 60 ft tall tree. Several branches were observed broken with fresh breaks and a section of the airplane was observed embedded in the tree along with two smaller pieces. Additionally, parts of the propeller blades and numerous broken branches with fresh breaks were located at the bottom of the tree.

A drainage reservoir full of water was located on the west side of the tree. The reservoir was about 20 ft by 50 ft. Numerous sections of the propeller were in or near the water. Additionally, the right-wing tip and parts of the wing were located there.

About 75 ft past the reservoir, the airplane wreckage came to rest upright on about a 140° magnetic heading. The wreckage site was at an elevation of about 1,429 ft msl. A ground disturbance was observed about 60 ft northeast from the wreckage that measures about 10 ft by 30 ft. All major components of the airplane necessary for flight were contained within the main wreckage site. Flight control continuity was unable to be established due to the extensive thermal damage sustained by the airplane. Most of the wreckage debris, consisted of small fragments of

the canopy and of the landing gear that had sheared off. The canopy fragments were clear of contamination. There was a postimpact fire that thermally damaged and consumed most of the airplane and the engine.

The engine appeared to be partially attached to the fuselage. The propeller hub also remained attached however, the propeller blades had separated. Further, the spinner and engine accessories appeared to be attached.

The main landing gear were both separated and located near the main wreckage.





Figure 2: Tree that airplane struck with section of the airplane visible on left side.

Submitted by: Albert Nixon