



# **Aviation Investigation Final Report**

Location: Waterville, Maine Accident Number: ERA21LA021

Date & Time: October 14, 2020, 08:20 Local Registration: N499CZ

Aircraft: Beech 99 Aircraft Damage: Substantial

**Defining Event:** Landing gear collapse **Injuries:** 1 None

Flight Conducted Under: Part 135: Air taxi & commuter - Non-scheduled

### **Analysis**

While taxiing to the ramp, the airplane's right main landing gear collapsed, resulting in substantial damage to the right wing. Examination of the right main landing gear drag leg support fitting and angle bracket revealed several areas of fatigue cracking with multiple origins. The attach angle bracket fracture exhibited features consistent with fatigue. The reason for the crack initiation could not be determined.

A review of the maintenance procedures performed on the right main landing gear 8 days prior to the accident found that they instructed the mechanic to add grease to the drag leg fitting. The procedures did not specify to examine the landing gear for fatigue cracking or anomalies; therefore, it is unlikely that the mechanic would have looked in the area of the cracked main landing gear drag leg support fitting and angle bracket. Furthermore, there was no nondestructive testing procedures for examining the main landing gear drag brace, so it's unlikely an inspection would have detected the multiple areas of fatigue cracking.

### **Probable Cause and Findings**

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be:

A failure of the right main landing gear drag leg support fitting and angle bracket as a result of multiple areas of fatigue cracking.

## **Findings**

Aircraft

Main landing gear attach sec - Fatigue/wear/corrosion

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#### **Factual Information**

#### **History of Flight**

Taxi-from runway

Landing gear collapse (Defining event)

On October 14, 2020, about 0820 eastern daylight time, a Beechcraft 99, N499CZ, was substantially damaged when it was involved in an accident at Waterville Robert LaFleur Airport (WVL), Waterville, Maine. The commercial pilot was not injured. The airplane was operated as a Title 14 *Code of Federal Regulations* Part 135 cargo flight.

According to the pilot, the landing at WVL was not "firm or hard" and during the landing roll, he used reverse thrust and minimal braking to slow the airplane to a "standard taxi speed." As he initiated a right turn to exit the runway onto the taxiway, the airplane's right main landing gear collapsed, resulting in substantial damage to the right wing.

An examination of the airplane by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) inspector who responded to the site revealed the drag leg of the right main landing gear was fractured.

According to FAA airworthiness records, the airplane was manufactured in 1969. It was maintained with an approved aircraft inspection program. The airplane's most recent inspection was completed on October 6, 2020, at an airframe time of 39,544.45 hours. At that time, the right main landing gear was lubricated in accordance with the operator's approved aircraft inspection program. The guidance instructed the mechanic to add grease to the drag leg fitting. It did not instruct the mechanic to examine the landing gear for fatigue cracking or anomalies. An overhaul of the right main landing gear drag brace was performed every 7,500 flight cycles or 120 months. The most recent overhaul was performed on March 23, 2017, at an airframe total time of 38,485.5 hours. There were no nondestructive testing inspection procedures for the main landing gear drag braces prior to the accident.

The National Transportation Safety Board Materials Laboratory examined the right drag leg support fitting and right main landing gear attach angle bracket. Examination of the right drag leg support fitting revealed the presence of several areas of pre-existing progressive fractures originating at the outer surface of the part with radial marks emanating inward, visible curved crack arrest marks, and microscopic striations consistent with fatigue. The largest fatigue crack originated at an external radius feature where parallel gouges and periodic depressions were observed on the adjacent surface. The smaller fatigue cracks originated at internal radii and features resembling ratchet marks were observed at each location, consistent with multiple initiation sites. The attach angle bracket fracture exhibited features consistent with fatigue emanating from the nut plate side and the opposite drag leg support fitting interface side.

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### **Pilot Information**

Certificate:	Commercial	Age:	28,Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land; Multi-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	4-point
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	
Medical Certification:	Class 1 With waivers/limitations	Last FAA Medical Exam:	June 18, 2020
Occupational Pilot:	Yes	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	September 18, 2020
Flight Time:	1656 hours (Total, all aircraft), 577 hours (Total, this make and model), 1081 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 144 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 30 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 2 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

## Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Beech	Registration:	N499CZ
Model/Series:	99 A	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:	1969	Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	U-81
Landing Gear Type:	Retractable - Tricycle	Seats:	2
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	October 6, 2020 AAIP	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	10900 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	2 Turbo prop
Airframe Total Time:	39544.45 Hrs as of last inspection	Engine Manufacturer:	Pratt & Whitney Canada
ELT:	C126 installed, not activated	Engine Model/Series:	PT6A-28
Registered Owner:	N499CZ LLC	Rated Power:	680 Horsepower
Operator:	Freight Runners	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	Commuter air carrier (135)
Operator Does Business As:		Operator Designator Code:	KCQA

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## Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	KWVL,310 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	0 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	07:56 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	78°
<b>Lowest Cloud Condition:</b>	Clear	Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	3 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	330°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	29.72 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	10°C / 9°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipita	ation	
Departure Point:	Manchester, NH (MHT)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	IFR
Destination:	Waterville, ME	Type of Clearance:	IFR
Departure Time:	07:06 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class G

## **Airport Information**

Airport:	Waterville Robert LaFleur Airport WVL	Runway Surface Type:	Asphalt
Airport Elevation:	332 ft msl	<b>Runway Surface Condition:</b>	Wet
Runway Used:	23	IFR Approach:	Visual
Runway Length/Width:	5500 ft / 100 ft	VFR Approach/Landing:	None

## Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 None	Latitude, Longitude:	44.531471,-69.676932(est)

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#### **Administrative Information**

Investigator In Charge (IIC): Kemner, Heidi

Additional Participating Persons: David Roakes; FAA/FSDO; Portland Andrew Hall; Textron Aviation; Wichita, KS

Original Publish Date: October 13, 2022

Last Revision Date:
Investigation Class: Class 3

Note: The NTSB did not travel to the scene of this accident.

Investigation Docket: https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=102152

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) is an independent federal agency charged by Congress with investigating every civil aviation accident in the United States and significant events in other modes of transportation—railroad, transit, highway, marine, pipeline, and commercial space. We determine the probable causes of the accidents and events we investigate, and issue safety recommendations aimed at preventing future occurrences. In addition, we conduct transportation safety research studies and offer information and other assistance to family members and survivors for each accident or event we investigate. We also serve as the appellate authority for enforcement actions involving aviation and mariner certificates issued by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and US Coast Guard, and we adjudicate appeals of civil penalty actions taken by the FAA.

The NTSB does not assign fault or blame for an accident or incident; rather, as specified by NTSB regulation, "accident/incident investigations are fact-finding proceedings with no formal issues and no adverse parties ... and are not conducted for the purpose of determining the rights or liabilities of any person" (Title 49 Code of Federal Regulations section 831.4). Assignment of fault or legal liability is not relevant to the NTSB's statutory mission to improve transportation safety by investigating accidents and incidents and issuing safety recommendations. In addition, statutory language prohibits the admission into evidence or use of any part of an NTSB report related to an accident in a civil action for damages resulting from a matter mentioned in the report (Title 49 United States Code section 1154(b)). A factual report that may be admissible under 49 United States Code section 1154(b) is available here.

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