



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	New Cuyama, California	Accident Number:	WPR22LA049
Date & Time:	November 24, 2021, 10:20 Local	Registration:	N29508
Aircraft:	Taylorcraft BL-65	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Defining Event:	Security/criminal event	Injuries:	1 Minor
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The pilot reported that the airplane’s engine lost power during cruise flight over mountainous terrain. He stated that after determining that there were no available emergency landing spots, he decided to bail out. The airplane was destroyed during the impact sequence, and the pilot sustained minor injuries as a result of the parachute jump.

Shortly after the accident, the pilot provided a statement regarding the circumstances to the NTSB and FAA, and in a series of correspondences later stated that he had not been able to locate the airplane wreckage. However, evidence gathered by the NTSB and FAA indicated that the pilot had recovered the airplane from the accident site, destroyed it, and then disposed of the remains.

The case was referred to the U.S. Department of Transportation Office of Inspector General, and in May 2023, the pilot admitted to the US Attorney’s Office that he both intentionally crashed the airplane, and destroyed the evidence. He plead guilty to a felony charge for obstructing a federal investigation by deliberately destroying the airplane wreckage.

Probable Cause and Findings

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

The pilot’s decision to intentionally crash the airplane.

Findings

Personnel issues	(general) - Pilot
Personnel issues	Decision making/judgment - Pilot

Factual Information

History of Flight

Enroute-cruise	Security/criminal event (Defining event)
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Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	28, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Front
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	Unknown
Instrument Rating(s):	None	Second Pilot Present:	
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	
Medical Certification:	Class 1 Without waivers/limitations	Last FAA Medical Exam:	November 20, 2018
Occupational Pilot:	No	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	June 16, 2020
Flight Time:	166 hours (Total, all aircraft), 5.5 hours (Total, this make and model), 166 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Taylorcraft	Registration:	N29508
Model/Series:	BL-65	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:	1940	Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	2351
Landing Gear Type:	Tailwheel	Seats:	2
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	February 18, 2016 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	1150 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	0.5 Hrs	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	2533 Hrs as of last inspection	Engine Manufacturer:	LYCOMING
ELT:	Installed	Engine Model/Series:	O-145B SERIES
Registered Owner:	On file	Rated Power:	65 Horsepower
Operator:	On file	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	KIZA,671 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	14 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	10:15 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	205°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	4 knots / None	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	240°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30.1 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	13°C / 4°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Lompoc, CA (LPC)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	
Destination:	Mammoth Lakes, CA (MMH)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	09:51 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class E

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Minor	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Passenger Injuries:		Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:		Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 Minor	Latitude, Longitude:	34.814,-119.9591(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Simpson, Elliott
Additional Participating Persons:	Eric Burg; FAA FSDO; Van Nuys, CA Scott Krantz; FAA FSDO; Van Nuys, CA
Original Publish Date:	August 17, 2023
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class 4
Note:	The NTSB did not travel to the scene of this accident.
Investigation Docket:	https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=104325

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](#).