



Aviation Investigation Preliminary Report

Location:	Deer Harbor, WA	Accident Number:	WPR24FA184
Date & Time:	June 7, 2024, 11:40 Local	Registration:	N268AF
Aircraft:	Beech A45	Injuries:	1 Fatal
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

On June 7, 2024, about 1140 Pacific daylight time, a Beech A45, N268AF, was destroyed when it was involved in an accident near Deer Harbor, Washington. The pilot was fatally injured. The airplane was operated as a Title 14 *Code of Federal Regulations* part 91 personal flight.

The airplane was based at Skagit Regional Airport (BVS), Burlington, Washington, and stored in a museum facility founded by the pilot. The pilot's son was working at the museum on the day of the accident and reported that the pilot arrived there that morning and appeared to be in good spirits. He stated that he was going to perform an "Orcas run", a phrase the pilot used to describe a flight around the San Juan Island archipelago, with a pass over his previous home on Orcas Island. The pilot's son stated that a touch-and-go landing at Orcas Island Airport (ORS) would not be unusual for such a trip.

The pilot boarded the airplane about 1050, and at 1100, a family friend received a text message from him indicating that he would be flying past her house about 1140, which was located close to his old home on the western shore of Orcas Island. The friend reported that such flights were not unusual, and this was the first time he had performed one this year. She stated that he typically performs two flybys, and although sometimes he rocks the airplanes wings as he passes by, he never performed any kind of aerobatic maneuvers.

Limited Automatic Dependent Surveillance-Broadcast data was available for the flight, however, radar data provided by the Federal Aviation Administration showed a target departing BVS about 1113, that was transmitting a 1200 beacon code, but with no altitude information. The target flew a western track towards ORS that generally followed the shorelines. At 1125:32, the target was lined up on final for ORS runway 34, and about 4 minutes later, the target had departed the airport area and was tracking southwest.

Over the next 9 minutes, the target flew a series of passes back and forth along the coastline of the San Juan Channel, and by 1137:30 it was heading north, along the west coast of Orcas

Island (see figure 1). The friend reported that about this time she could hear the familiar sound of his airplane, and a short time later she observed the airplane overhead traveling north along the shoreline in front of her house.

The airplane then flew behind trees and out of view, and she could hear but not see what sounded like the airplane making a left turn to the south. The airplane then came into view as it rolled out on a south heading. It was flying over the water, but higher than the previous occasions. After it passed by, she could see the left wing drop, and she thought this was part of his usual routine. However, the wing continued to drop as the airplane began to rapidly descend towards the water.

Another witness who was located along the same shoreline, but about 1/3 mile to the north, heard what he thought was a vintage airplane. He stated that this was not unusual for the area, and he went out onto his deck to look for it. He was facing west as it came into view, and he began to record it with his phone. At the beginning of the recording the airplane was inverted with a slight nose down attitude and heading generally to the south. Over the next 3 seconds the airplane had transitioned to an almost vertical dive. As the airplane approached the water, it began to pull out of the dive, now facing the opposite direction. By the time it had recovered to almost wings level, upright attitude, the airplane struck the water with its right wingtip, and spun across the water on a northern trajectory.

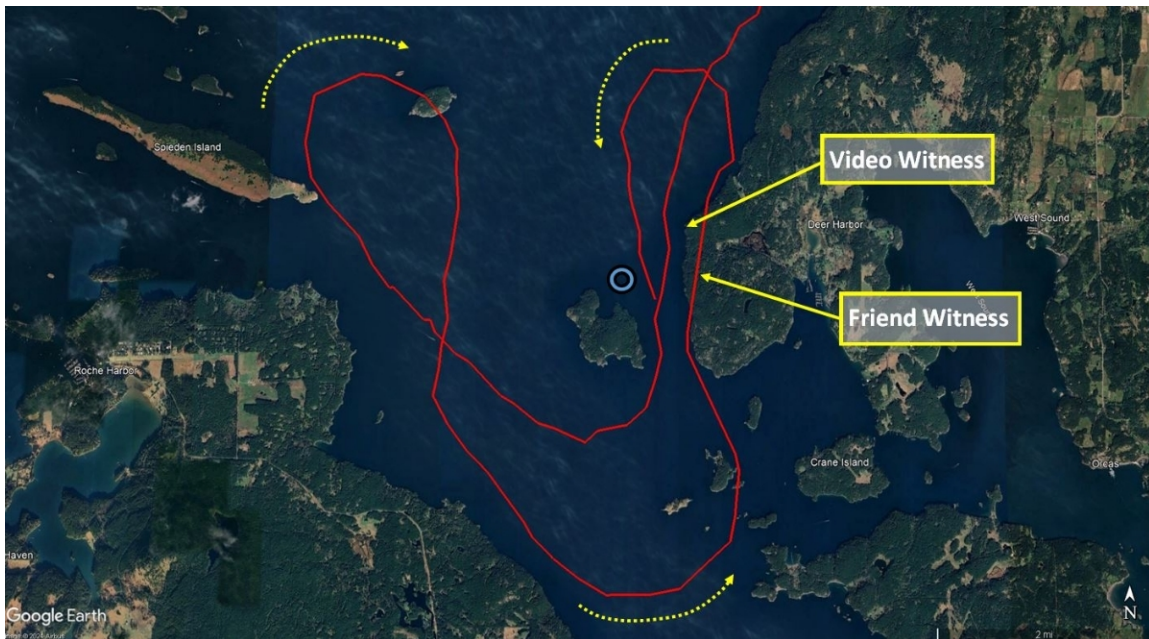


Figure 1 – Accident location. Red line indicates approximate track based on radar data; blue circle denotes location of main wreckage.

The fuselage was located about 1,700 ft west of the last radar target, in about 30 ft of water. Most of the wreckage was recovered from the channel during the following week and has been

stored for further examination. At the time of the preliminary report publication, no other witnesses to the accident have come forward.

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Beech	Registration:	N268AF
Model/Series:	A45	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Amateur Built:			
Operator:	On file	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None
Operator Designator Code:			

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	VMC	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	KBVS	Observation Time:	11:35 Local
Distance from Accident Site:	26 Nautical Miles	Temperature/Dew Point:	17°C /15°C
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:	10 knots, 300°
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility:	10 miles
Altimeter Setting:	30.03 inches Hg	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	NONE
Departure Point:	Burlington, WA (BVS)	Destination:	Burlington, WA (BVS)

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Fatal	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Fire:	On-ground
Ground Injuries:		Aircraft Explosion:	On-ground
Total Injuries:	1 Fatal	Latitude, Longitude:	48.619748,-123.04244 (est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Simpson, Elliott
Additional Participating Persons:	Melanie A. Folcik Barillaro; FAA AVP-110; Washington , DC Clifford Barnes; FAA FSDO; Seattle, WA
Investigation Class:	Class 3
Note:	