



Aviation Investigation Preliminary Report

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| Location: | Elkhart, IL | Accident Number: | CEN24FA312 |
| Date & Time: | August 7, 2024, 08:00 Local | Registration: | N3093H |
| Aircraft: | ENGINEERING & RESEARCH ERCOUPE 415-C | Injuries: | 1 Fatal |
| Flight Conducted Under: | Part 91: General aviation - Personal | | |

On August 10, 2024, about 2000 central daylight time an Ercoupe 415-C, N3093H, was found in a soybean field near Elkhart, Illinois. The pilot was fatally injured. A post impact fire ensued, and the airplane was destroyed. The flight was operated under the provisions of Title 14 *Code of Federal Regulations* Part 91 as a personal flight.

On August 6, 2024, the airplane departed Roben-Hood Airport (RQB) in Big Rapids, Michigan, about 1700 and landed at Vermilion Regional Airport (DNV) in Danville, Illinois, about 1900. A fuel receipt confirmed that the pilot filled the airplane with 16.34 gallons of fuel at DNV.

A friend of the pilot stated that the pilot called him on the evening of August 6th and told him that he was spending the night at DNV and would depart the morning of August 7th to embark on a multi-leg cross country flight that would terminate on August 8th in Colorado Springs, Colorado. When the pilot did not arrive in Colorado Springs, the friend reported him missing on August 10th, and the Federal Aviation Administration issued an Alert Notice (ALNOT).

The airplane was not equipped with Automated Dependent Surveillance-Broadcast, nor did it have an operating transponder, so tracking the airplane after it departed DNV was difficult. The Civil Air Patrol Cell Phone Forensics Team reported that the last cell phone ping from the pilot's cell phone was near Mount Pulaski, Illinois, at 0759 on August 7th. An Illinois Civil Air Patrol aircrew was deployed to the Mount Pulaski area on August 10th and located the airplane wreckage about 11 miles west of Mount Pulaski.

The debris field was on an east to west heading and about 140 ft long. About 45 ft after vegetation displacement, was the right wing taxi light followed by the spinner, 41 ft to the west. A back window, left landing gear, and tail cone, were found 29 ft to the west of the spinner. About 31 ft south of where the back window, left hand landing gear, and tail cone were found was a 3-foot section of the outboard side of the right wing. The main wreckage was found

halfway between that portion of the right wing and the left landing gear, 24.5 ft to the west. The main wreckage came to rest upright on a heading of about 030°, was burned, and consisted of the fuselage, right landing gear, left wing, a portion of the right wing, empennage, engine, and propeller.

The airplane was retained for further examination.

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

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|----------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------|
| Aircraft Make: | ENGINEERING & RESEARCH | Registration: | N3093H |
| Model/Series: | ERCOUPE 415-C | Aircraft Category: | Airplane |
| Amateur Built: | | | |
| Operator: | On file | Operating Certificate(s) Held: | None |
| Operator Designator Code: | | | |

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

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|---|------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Conditions at Accident Site: | VMC | Condition of Light: | Day |
| Observation Facility, Elevation: | KSPI | Observation Time: | 07:52 Local |
| Distance from Accident Site: | 13 Nautical Miles | Temperature/Dew Point: | 20°C /18°C |
| Lowest Cloud Condition: | | Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction: | 6 knots / None, 360° |
| Lowest Ceiling: | Overcast / 3100 ft AGL | Visibility: | 10 miles |
| Altimeter Setting: | 29.98 inches Hg | Type of Flight Plan Filed: | NONE |
| Departure Point: | Danville, IN (2R2) | Destination: | Hill City, KS (HLC) |

Wreckage and Impact Information

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|----------------------------|---------|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| Crew Injuries: | 1 Fatal | Aircraft Damage: | Destroyed |
| Passenger Injuries: | N/A | Aircraft Fire: | Fire at unknown time |
| Ground Injuries: | N/A | Aircraft Explosion: | Unknown |
| Total Injuries: | 1 Fatal | Latitude, Longitude: | 39.98587,-89.47137 |

Administrative Information

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| Investigator In Charge (IIC): | Abraham, Laura |
| Additional Participating Persons: | Brian Semelroth; FAA; Springfield , IL |
| Investigation Class: | Class 3 |
| Note: | |

