



# Aviation Investigation Final Report

<b>Location:</b>	White Water, California	<b>Accident Number:</b>	LAX01LA153
<b>Date &amp; Time:</b>	April 22, 2001, 15:40 Local	<b>Registration:</b>	N32MJ
<b>Aircraft:</b>	HOLT CHRISTIAN EAGLE II	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Destroyed
<b>Defining Event:</b>		<b>Injuries:</b>	1 Fatal
<b>Flight Conducted Under:</b>	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

## Analysis

The airplane collided with power lines while flying at low level in a desert canyon. A witness reported seeing the airplane flying at a low altitude in level flight in a canyon. The airplane banked right, rolled level, and then banked left. During the left bank, the right wing impacted power lines and pieces of the airplane separated. The airplane then spiraled to the ground. The engine sound did not change.

## Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The pilot's failure to maintain an adequate clearance from the power lines during an intentional low level flight.

## Findings

Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH OBJECT  
Phase of Operation: MANEUVERING

### Findings

1. OBJECT - WIRE, TRANSMISSION
2. (C) LOW ALTITUDE FLIGHT/MANEUVER - INTENTIONAL - PILOT IN COMMAND
3. (C) CLEARANCE - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND

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Occurrence #2: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER

Phase of Operation: DESCENT - UNCONTROLLED

Findings

4. TERRAIN CONDITION - GROUND

## Factual Information

On April 22, 2001, about 1540 Pacific daylight time, an experimental Holt Christian Eagle II, N32MJ, collided with power lines near White Water, California. The owner was operating the airplane under the provisions of 14 CFR Part 91. The commercial pilot, the sole occupant, sustained fatal injuries; the airplane was destroyed. The personal local flight departed Palm Springs, California, about 1520. Day visual meteorological conditions prevailed, and no flight plan had been filed.

Several witness reported seeing the airplane flying at a low level. The airplane was in a level attitude and moving toward a canyon near Interstate 10. The airplane banked right, rolled level, and then banked left. During the left bank the right wing impacted power lines and pieces of the airplane separated. The airplane then spiraled to the ground. The engine sound did not change.

A review of Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) airman records revealed the pilot held a commercial pilot certificate with airplane single engine land and instrument airplane ratings. The pilot held a third-class medical certificate that was issued on March 22, 2001. It had the limitations that the pilot must possess corrective lenses for near vision. An examination of excerpts from the pilot's logbook indicated an estimated total flight time of 1,037 hours. Examination of the maintenance records revealed no unresolved maintenance discrepancies against the airplane prior to departure.

The Riverside County Coroner completed an autopsy. The FAA Toxicology and Accident Research Laboratory performed toxicological testing of specimens of the pilot. The results of the analysis were negative for carbon monoxide, cyanide, volatiles, and tested drugs.

## Pilot Information

<b>Certificate:</b>	Commercial	<b>Age:</b>	69, Male
<b>Airplane Rating(s):</b>	Single-engine land	<b>Seat Occupied:</b>	Front
<b>Other Aircraft Rating(s):</b>	None	<b>Restraint Used:</b>	
<b>Instrument Rating(s):</b>	Airplane	<b>Second Pilot Present:</b>	No
<b>Instructor Rating(s):</b>	None	<b>Toxicology Performed:</b>	Yes
<b>Medical Certification:</b>	Class 3 Valid Medical-w/ waivers/lim	<b>Last FAA Medical Exam:</b>	March 22, 2001
<b>Occupational Pilot:</b>	UNK	<b>Last Flight Review or Equivalent:</b>	July 2, 1999
<b>Flight Time:</b>	1037 hours (Total, all aircraft), 102 hours (Total, this make and model)		

## Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

<b>Aircraft Make:</b>	HOLT	<b>Registration:</b>	N32MJ
<b>Model/Series:</b>	CHRISTIAN EAGLE II	<b>Aircraft Category:</b>	Airplane
<b>Year of Manufacture:</b>		<b>Amateur Built:</b>	Yes
<b>Airworthiness Certificate:</b>	Experimental (Special)	<b>Serial Number:</b>	HOLT0001
<b>Landing Gear Type:</b>	Tailwheel	<b>Seats:</b>	2
<b>Date/Type of Last Inspection:</b>	March 1, 2001 Annual	<b>Certified Max Gross Wt.:</b>	1578 lbs
<b>Time Since Last Inspection:</b>		<b>Engines:</b>	1 Reciprocating
<b>Airframe Total Time:</b>	599 Hrs as of last inspection	<b>Engine Manufacturer:</b>	Rotax
<b>ELT:</b>	Installed, not activated	<b>Engine Model/Series:</b>	
<b>Registered Owner:</b>	JOSEPH A. LUKINS	<b>Rated Power:</b>	
<b>Operator:</b>		<b>Operating Certificate(s) Held:</b>	None

## Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

<b>Conditions at Accident Site:</b>	Visual (VMC)	<b>Condition of Light:</b>	Day
<b>Observation Facility, Elevation:</b>	PSP,474 ft msl	<b>Distance from Accident Site:</b>	8 Nautical Miles
<b>Observation Time:</b>	15:53 Local	<b>Direction from Accident Site:</b>	110°
<b>Lowest Cloud Condition:</b>	Clear	<b>Visibility</b>	10 miles
<b>Lowest Ceiling:</b>	None	<b>Visibility (RVR):</b>	
<b>Wind Speed/Gusts:</b>	4 knots / 0 knots	<b>Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:</b>	/
<b>Wind Direction:</b>		<b>Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:</b>	/
<b>Altimeter Setting:</b>	30.04 inches Hg	<b>Temperature/Dew Point:</b>	27°C / 2°C
<b>Precipitation and Obscuration:</b>	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
<b>Departure Point:</b>	PALM SPRINGS, CA (PSP )	<b>Type of Flight Plan Filed:</b>	None
<b>Destination:</b>		<b>Type of Clearance:</b>	None
<b>Departure Time:</b>	15:20 Local	<b>Type of Airspace:</b>	Class G

## Wreckage and Impact Information

<b>Crew Injuries:</b>	1 Fatal	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Destroyed
<b>Passenger Injuries:</b>		<b>Aircraft Fire:</b>	None
<b>Ground Injuries:</b>	N/A	<b>Aircraft Explosion:</b>	None
<b>Total Injuries:</b>	1 Fatal	<b>Latitude, Longitude:</b>	33.816665,-116.5

## Administrative Information

<b>Investigator In Charge (IIC):</b>	Plagens, Howard
<b>Additional Participating Persons:</b>	STEVEN GROOVER; Federal Aviation Administration; RIVERSIDE, CA
<b>Original Publish Date:</b>	November 25, 2003
<b>Last Revision Date:</b>	
<b>Investigation Class:</b>	<a href="#">Class</a>
<b>Note:</b>	The NTSB traveled to the scene of this accident.
<b>Investigation Docket:</b>	<a href="https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=52110">https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=52110</a>

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](#).