



AVIATION



HIGHWAY



MARINE



RAILROAD



PIPELINE

Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Everglades City, Florida	Accident Number:	ERA12FA271
Date & Time:	April 6, 2012, 16:45 Local	Registration:	N548SF
Aircraft:	WEJEBE JOSE CA8 -SF	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:	Aerodynamic stall/spin	Injuries:	1 Fatal
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

Witnesses observed the airplane depart the airport to the north and make an abrupt right turn at an altitude of about 150 feet. One witness, who was also a pilot, described the wings as “shimmying,” appearing as if the airplane stalled before it banked to the right in a nose-down attitude. The airplane crashed and was nearly consumed during the postcrash fire. A postaccident examination was conducted with no preimpact mechanical anomalies noted.

Records indicate that the pilot built the airplane from a kit about 6 years before the accident. The pilot and airplane logbooks were not located during the investigation; therefore, the maintenance history for the airplane, and the pilot’s recent (and total) flight experience could not be determined.

Postaccident toxicological testing revealed metabolites of the drug diazepam (Valium) in the pilot’s blood and urine. Valium is a prescription benzodiazepine classed as a central nervous system depressant and tranquilizer, used as a sleep aid and to inhibit anxiety. The amount noted in the pilot’s blood suggested he took the drug 12 to 24 hours before the accident, and, as a result, it would not have affected his performance.

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 sufficient airspeed during the initial climb after takeoff, which resulted in an aerodynamic stall and loss of airplane control.

Findings

Aircraft	Airspeed - Not attained/maintained
Personnel issues	Lack of action - Pilot

Factual Information

History of Flight

Initial climb	Aerodynamic stall/spin (Defining event)
Initial climb	Loss of control in flight
Uncontrolled descent	Collision with terr/obj (non-CFIT)

HISTORY OF FLIGHT

On April 6, 2012, at 1645 eastern daylight time, an experimental amateur-built Comp Air 8 CA8-SF, N548SF, was substantially damaged when it impacted the ground shortly after takeoff from Everglades Airpark (X01), Everglades City, Florida. The certificated private pilot was fatally injured. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed and no flight plan was filed for the flight which was destined for Merritt Island Airport (COI), Merritt Island, Florida. The personal flight was conducted under the provisions of Title 14 Code of Federal Regulations Part 91.

The pilot was a professional fisherman who produced his own fishing show. According to interviews with the pilot’s family and friends, he had flown into Everglades Airpark earlier in the week to film the show.

The pilot’s cameraman reported to local law enforcement that they did some filming on the day of the accident, and then he drove the pilot to the airport for his return flight to COI. The cameraman observed the pilot perform a preflight inspection on the airplane, and then walk toward the airport operations building to pay his parking fee. At that point, the cameraman left the airport, and therefore did not observe the takeoff.

A witness observed the airplane depart from runway 33 and make a sharp right turn at an altitude of about 100 to 150 feet. The airplane became almost inverted, with the right wing down, before it rolled back toward a level attitude. The nose remained in a nose-down attitude and the airplane banked to the left before impacting the ground in a 10-15 degree left-wing-low attitude.

Another witness, who was also a pilot, observed the accident airplane depart the airport to the north. According to the witness, the airplane took off with an “extremely sharp upward angle.” As the airplane climbed, it appeared to be “shimmying the wings,” which the witness described as “indicative of a stall.” He then heard a change in the pitch of the propeller as the airplane turned “sharply” to the right, “with the wind.” The airplane “flattened out” before impacting the ground.

PERSONNEL INFORMATION

The pilot held a private pilot certificate, with a rating for airplane single-engine land. His most recent third-class Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) medical certificate was issued on February 24, 2011. At that time, he reported 1,208 hours of total flight experience.

Prior to the medical certificate issued in 2011, the pilot's most recent medical certificate was issued on June 14, 2006. At that time, he reported 621 hours of total flight experience.

The pilot's first medical certificate was issued on July 13, 2004. At that time, the pilot reported 30 hours of total flight experience.

The pilot's family was unable to locate any pilot logbooks.

AIRCRAFT INFORMATION

The Comp Air 8 airplane was a single-engine kit-built airplane powered by a Walter 601 turboprop engine. The pilot was also the builder of the airplane, completing it in 2006, at which time it received an FAA airworthiness certificate.

According to the facility who maintained the accident airplane's engine, the most recent maintenance they performed was on September 7, 2010. The maintenance was requested to fix internal and external corrosion on the engine as a result from standing outside at sea level.

A representative from Composite Technologies stated the accident pilot most recently brought the airplane to their facility about 4 weeks prior to the accident to have maintenance performed on the nose wheel. They also cleaned the airplane, as oil was appearing on the underside of the cowlings and fuselage.

The representative also stated that the pilot often performed his own maintenance.

The pilot's family was unable to locate the logbooks for the airplane or engine.

Additionally, requests made to Comp Air for any documents regarding the building or maintenance of the airplane went unanswered during the investigation.

METEOROLOGICAL INFORMATION

The wind recorded at Naples Municipal Airport (KAPF), Naples, Florida, located about 27 nautical miles northwest of the accident site, at 1753 was from 310 degrees at 12 knots gusting to 21 knots.

Examination of the Aircraft Operations Log for X01 revealed two entries by other pilots on the day of the accident. The comment regarding conditions at the airport, noted next to the entries, stated "14-22 KTS."

AIRPORT INFORMATION

Everglades Airpark was comprised of a single runway, oriented on a heading of 15/33 degrees. The asphalt runway was 2,400 feet long and 60 feet wide.

The overnight parking log for X01 confirmed that the pilot arrived at the airport on March 31, 2012.

WRECKAGE AND IMPACT INFORMATION

The airplane impacted the ground about 275 yards east of the departure end of runway 33. The wreckage path was about 20 feet in length, and initiated with 2 indentations in the ground, similar to the shape of the propeller spinner. The propeller was separated from the engine and located prior to the main wreckage along the wreckage path.

The main wreckage was oriented on a heading of 050 degrees, and nearly consumed by the post-crash fire. The left wing was separated from the fuselage and came to rest on top of the cockpit area. The engine was separated from the firewall and came to rest adjacent to the leading edge of the left wing. The remnants of the right wing, fuselage, and empennage sections remained attached through cables and wiring. The vertical stabilizer was lying flat on top of the right horizontal stabilizer.

Flight control continuity was confirmed from the cockpit to the flight controls.

The airplane and engine were recovered from the accident site and a more detailed examination was performed on April 24, 2012. A detailed report of the examination can be found in the public docket for this investigation. In summary, the examination of the engine and propeller revealed damage consistent with power application (in excess of 94%) at the time of impact. The airframe examination revealed no mechanical anomalies, and the pilot's seat position was confirmed to be in the appropriate position for normal operation.

MEDICAL AND PATHOLOGICAL INFORMATION

The Collier County District Twenty Medical Examiner performed an autopsy on the pilot on April 7, 2012. The cause of death was listed as Multiple Blunt Injuries with Conflagration. The report also detailed demonstrated marked atherosclerosis with 80% stenosis in the coronary arteries. The location or extent of maximal stenosis was not mentioned and no microscopic evaluation of the heart was performed.

The FAA Toxicology and Accident Research Laboratory, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma conducted toxicological testing on the pilot. Following were the results of the toxicological testing:

0.046 (ug/ml, ug/g) Nordiazepam detected in Blood

0.019 (ug/ml, ug/g) Nordiazepam detected in Urine

Oxazepam NOT detected in Blood
0.318 (ug/ml, ug/g) Oxazepam detected in Urine
0.08 (ug/ml, ug/g) Temazepam detected in Urine
Temazepam NOT detected in Blood

All three of these drugs are metabolites of diazepam (marketed under the trade name Valium), a prescription benzodiazepine classed as a central nervous system depressant and tranquilizer and used as a sleep aid and anxiolytic.

According to the pilot's FAA medical file, he first obtained third class medical certificate in 2004. He was recertified in 2006 and 2011; the only medical event reported in the interim was an uncomplicated hip replacement surgery. He denied taking any medication at each medical examination.

TESTS AND RESEARCH

A LaCie Hard Drive was retained from the wreckage and downloaded in the NTSB Video Recorder Laboratory. The download of the recording revealed no content of the accident flight.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Fueling Information

According to records provided by COI, the airplane was fueled with 152 gallons of Jet A fuel on March 31, 2012. Additionally, the tanks and trucks used at the facility were inspected daily. According to the inspection report, no anomalies were identified during the entire month.

No fuel was purchased by the pilot at X01.

Additional Interviews

A witness observed the accident airplane flying a few days prior to the accident. He was standing outside his shop on an island about 3 miles from X01, when he observed the accident airplane "buzzing the island" at an altitude of 200-300 feet, performing steep turns. The witness reported the airplane approached the island from the northwest, and maneuvered over the island "low, fast, and in a steep bank."

An interview with an Operations Specialist at X01 revealed the accident pilot had a history of "hotdogging" at the Airpark. He often performed steep turns after takeoff, and in at least one instance the airplane almost rolled inverted. The traffic pattern for runway 33 required a left turn after takeoff to avoid departures over the nearby town. According to the Specialist, the accident pilot had been reminded on several occasions about the procedures; however, he often performed a right turn after departure from runway 33 and flew over the adjacent town.

The cameraman was interviewed by local law enforcement after the accident; however, subsequent requests for interviews by NTSB personnel were denied. Additionally, a request for video documentation of the aircraft flying in the area was also not responded to.

Law Enforcement Records

A review of law enforcement and FAA records revealed the pilot received four speeding tickets between 1990 and 2012. Additionally, his driver's license was suspended in 2005 after driving with an unlawful blood-alcohol content (driving under the influence).

The pilot did report the offense to the FAA (as required), and a review of his most recent medical application revealed a comment in the notes section of the application which stated "arrest for DUI appealed and not convicted. Charged with reckless driving. License reinstated."

A review of the pilot's FAA airman file revealed no previous accidents or incidents.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	54, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Unknown
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	None	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	Yes
Medical Certification:	Class 3 Without waivers/limitations	Last FAA Medical Exam:	February 24, 2011
Occupational Pilot:	No	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	1208 hours (Total, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	WEJEBE JOSE	Registration:	N548SF
Model/Series:	CA8 -SF	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	Yes
Airworthiness Certificate:	Experimental (Special)	Serial Number:	0585552921
Landing Gear Type:	Tricycle	Seats:	4
Date/Type of Last Inspection:		Certified Max Gross Wt.:	
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	1 Turbo prop
Airframe Total Time:		Engine Manufacturer:	WALTER
ELT:		Engine Model/Series:	601D
Registered Owner:	SPANISH FLY ENTERPRISES INC	Rated Power:	724 Horsepower
Operator:	Jose Wejebe	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	APF,8 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	27 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	17:53 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	300°
Lowest Cloud Condition:		Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	Broken / 2100 ft AGL	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	12 knots / 21 knots	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	310°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	29.81 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	27°C / 19°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Everglades City, FL (X01)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	Merritt Island, FL (COI)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:		Type of Airspace:	

Airport Information

Airport:	Everglades Airpark X01	Runway Surface Type:	Asphalt
Airport Elevation:		Runway Surface Condition:	
Runway Used:	33	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:	2400 ft / 60 ft	VFR Approach/Landing:	None

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Fatal	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:		Aircraft Fire:	On-ground
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 Fatal	Latitude, Longitude:	25.852777,-81.390274

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Demko, Jill
Additional Participating Persons:	JR Rollins; FAA/FSDO; Miramar, FL
Original Publish Date:	August 13, 2013
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	The NTSB traveled to the scene of this accident.
Investigation Docket:	https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=83316

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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](#).