



Aviation Investigation Preliminary Report

Location:	Montebello, VA	Accident Number:	ERA23FA256
Date & Time:	June 4, 2023, 15:23 Local	Registration:	N611VG
Aircraft:	Cessna 560	Injuries:	4 Fatal
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

On June 4, 2023, about 1523 eastern daylight time, a Cessna Citation 560 airplane, N611VG, was destroyed when it impacted terrain near Montebello, Virginia. The airline transport pilot and three passengers were fatally injured. The airplane was operated by Encore Motors of Melbourne Inc. as a personal flight conducted under the provisions of Title 14 *Code of Federal Regulations* Part 91.

According to individuals familiar with the airplane’s flight activity the day of the accident and flight track records, the pilot’s first flight of the day originated from the airplane’s home airport of Melbourne International Airport (MLB), Melbourne, Florida, at 1059. The pilot conducted the flight as a single pilot and subsequently landed at Elizabethton Municipal Airport (0A9), Elizabethton, Tennessee, at 1231, where 300 gallons of fuel was added to the airplane and the three passengers were picked up. The accident flight departed at 1313 destined for Long Island Mac Arthur Airport (ISP), New York, New York.

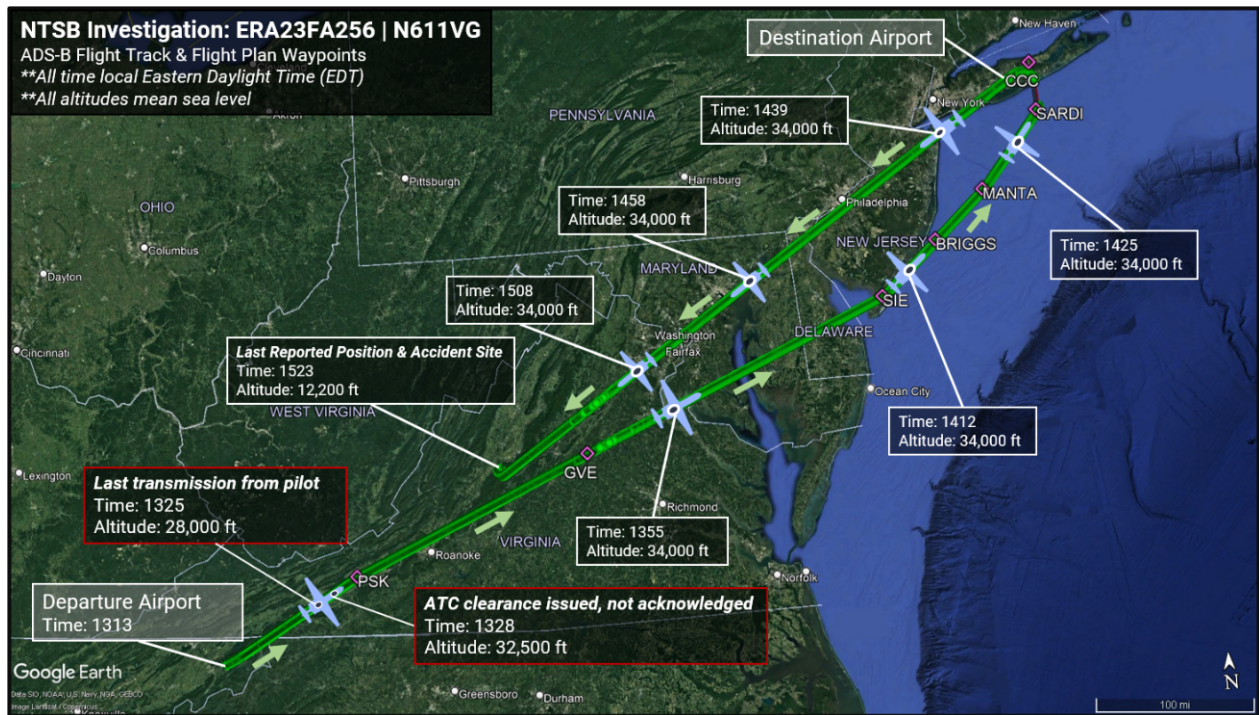
Review of preliminary Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) air traffic control audio recordings revealed that the pilot contacted the Atlanta Air Route Traffic Control Center shortly after takeoff, and reported climbing through 9,300 ft mean sea level (msl) to 10,000 ft. The controller subsequently cleared the flight to flight level 230 (23,000 ft) and the pilot read back the clearance. At 1322, the pilot was handed off to another controller with Atlanta Center. The pilot subsequently contacted the controller, advising that the airplane was maintaining flight level 230 (23,000 ft). The controller cleared the flight to flight level 290 (29,000 ft) and the pilot read back the clearance. At 1325, the controller cleared the airplane to flight level 340 (34,000 ft) and the pilot readback the clearance. At this time the airplane was about 28,000 ft.

At 1328, the controller amended the prior altitude clearance, instructing the pilot to stop the climb at 33,000 ft for crossing air traffic. The pilot did not respond to the amended clearance, the airplane continued the climb to 34,000 ft and leveled off. No further radio transmissions

from the pilot were received for the remainder of the flight, despite repeated attempts to contact the pilot.

Review of preliminary Automatic Dependent Surveillance – Broadcast (ADS-B) data found that the airplane’s flight track to the destination airport was consistent with the filed flight plan route. The airplane arrived overhead of ISP at 1432, maintaining 34,000 ft throughout the flight. The airplane subsequently continued flying southwest on a ground track of about 240°. The track showed little deviation or altitude change until 1522, where the airplane entered a rapidly descending right spiral descent into terrain.

According to a North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) statement, about 1520 the airplane was intercepted by fighter aircraft. The pilot was unresponsive to several radio transmissions, intercept flight maneuvers, and flare deployments. The figure below depicts the ADS-B flight track, the filed flight plan waypoints, and select time/altitude labels.



NTSB Figure: Overview of the ADS-B flight track, flight plan waypoints, and select time/altitude labels.

The airplane impacted mountainous and forested terrain a short distance from where the spiraling descent was observed. The signatures observed during an examination of the terrain, trees, and wreckage found at the accident site all were consistent with a high velocity, near vertical descent. The wreckage was extremely fragmented, scattered around a main crater, and evidence of a post-impact fire was observed. Fragments of both wings, fuselage, empennage, in addition to both engines, were located in the debris field. Flight control continuity could not be established due to the fragmentation of the wreckage. The cockpit was

destroyed in the impact. The wreckage was recovered from the accident site and retained for further examination.

According to recent maintenance inspection records, the airplane as of May 2023 was equipped with a cockpit voice recorder (CVR), however, at the time of this publication, a CVR had not been located. The airplane was not equipped with a flight data recorder, nor was it required to be.

According to FAA airman records, the pilot held an airline transport pilot certificate with ratings for airplane single-engine land and sea, in addition to airplane multi-engine land. He possessed type ratings in the CE-500 (appropriate for the accident airplane make and model), CE-650, CE-680, B-737, BA-3100, EMB-110, and N-B25. He was issued a first-class medical certificate on October 10, 2022. The pilot reported on a pilot history insurance form on May 3, 2023, that he possessed 34,500 total hours, of which 850 hours were logged in the CE-500 series. He reported a total of 110 hours in the CE-500 in the last 12 months, dated from May 2023.

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Cessna	Registration:	N611VG
Model/Series:	560 Citation V	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Amateur Built:			
Operator:		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:	CHO,631 ft msl	Observation Time:	15:53 Local
Distance from Accident Site:	33 Nautical Miles	Temperature/Dew Point:	21°C /12°C
Lowest Cloud Condition:		Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:	6 knots / , 50°
Lowest Ceiling:	Broken / 2900 ft AGL	Visibility:	10 miles
Altimeter Setting:	30.01 inches Hg	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	IFR
Departure Point:	Elizabethton, TN (0A9)	Destination:	Ronkonkoma, NY (ISP)

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Fatal	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Passenger Injuries:	3 Fatal	Aircraft Fire:	On-ground
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	4 Fatal	Latitude, Longitude:	37.921573,-79.103668

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC): Gerhardt, Adam

Additional Participating Persons: Mitch A. Mitchell; Federal Aviation Administration ; Washington, DC
Helen Tsai; Transportation Safety Board of Canada; Gatineau , OF
Ricardo J. Asensio; Textron Aviation; Wichita, KS
Kurt Gibson; Textron Aviation; Wichita, KS
David Studtmann; Honeywell Aerospace; Phoenix, AZ
Randolph W. Rushworth; Department of the United States Air Force; Washington, DC

Note: