

NTSB Identification: ERA16LA028

14 CFR Part 91: General Aviation

Accident occurred Monday, October 26, 2015 in Pascagoula, MS

Aircraft: SCHUMACHER Lancair Super ES, registration: N817PR

Injuries: 3 Fatal.

This is preliminary information, subject to change, and may contain errors. Any errors in this report will be corrected when the final report has been completed. NTSB investigators may not have traveled in support of this investigation and used data provided by various sources to prepare this aircraft accident report.

On October 26, 2015, about 1237 central daylight time, an experimental, amateur-built Lancair Super ES, N817PR, operated by a private individual, was presumed destroyed after it impacted the Mississippi Sound, in the vicinity of Pascagoula, Mississippi. The commercial pilot and two passengers were presumed fatally injured. The airplane departed from Gulfport-Biloxi International Airport (GPT), Gulfport, Mississippi, about 1220. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed at the departure airport. No flight plan had been filed for the personal flight that was conducted under the provisions of 14 Code of Federal Regulations Part 91.

According to preliminary information obtained from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), the airplane was owned by the pilot and based at Monroe Regional Airport (MLU), Monroe, Louisiana. Earlier in the day, the pilot flew from MLU to Ruston, Louisiana (RSN) to pick up one passenger, and then to GPT to pick up the second passenger. According to the wife of one of the passengers, the pilot was flying the occupants to South Carolina to attend a business meeting. Prior to departure from GPT, the pilot stated to air traffic controllers that he intended to take some pictures in the local area and then continue to "Daytona Beach." The airplane departed from runway 14 at GPT, made a left turn to the northeast at the Gulfport shoreline, and climbed to an altitude of 2,000 feet mean sea level (msl). About 1226, the pilot requested and was approved to terminate air traffic control flight following. The airplane's transponder code changed to "1200" and the pilot made a right turn to the southeast. The last recorded radar target with an associated altitude was at 1234:37, at an altitude of 2,800 feet msl; however, additional radar targets consistent with the accident airplane continued to about 1237, with the airplane located over the Mississippi Sound, about 10 miles south of the Trent Lott International Airport (PQL), Pascagoula, Mississippi. Fragmented debris associated with the airplane was subsequently found on a beach located about 9 miles northwest of the last radar target. A section of the empennage was located in the water about 3 miles northwest of the last radar target.

As of November 4, 2015, personnel from the United States Coast Guard and the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources had not located the occupants.

A search of the FAA aircraft registry database revealed that "N817PR" was not an active registration. A pilot operating handbook with the registration "N808PX" was located

among the debris. A representative from the pilot's family confirmed that the airplane had been previously registered as N808PX. Federal Aviation Administration records revealed that the accident airplane was issued a special airworthiness certificate in the experimental category on October 9, 2003, and it was purchased by the pilot through a limited liability company during August 2006.

The pilot reported 4,441 hours of total flight experience on his most recent application for an FAA third-class medical certificate, which was issued on September 26, 2014.

The weather reported at PQL at 1237, included wind from 110 degrees at 15 knots, with 25 knot gusts, visibility 4 miles in light rain and mist, scattered clouds at 800 feet above ground level, ceiling broken at 1,200 feet, overcast at 2,100 feet, temperature 23 degrees C, dew point 22 degrees C, and an altimeter setting of 29.73 inches of Hg.

In addition, there were active weather advisors for convective activity and instrument meteorological conditions for the area around the airplane's last known position. The wife of one of the passengers reported that while on the ground at GPT, her husband stated that the pilot intended to fly along the coast to avoid "the worst of the weather."