



Aviation Investigation Preliminary Report

Location:	Crystal River, FL	Accident Number:	ERA25FA001
Date & Time:	October 1, 2024, 15:40 Local	Registration:	N5868S
Aircraft:	Beech 95	Injuries:	1 Fatal
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

On October 1, 2024, about 1540 eastern daylight time, a Beech 95-B55, N5868S, was destroyed when it collided with terrain near Crystal River, Florida. The private pilot was fatally injured. The personal flight was conducted under the provisions of Title 14 Code of Federal Regulations Part 91.

Witnesses at a maintenance facility at Crystal River Airport (CGC), Crystal River, Florida, heard the accident pilot transmit a distress call over the airport’s common traffic advisory frequency. The pilot identified the airplane as “68S” and requested the location of the airport, citing visual reference to two large cooling towers. One of the witnesses informed the pilot that the airport was located 7 to 10 nautical miles southeast of his position.

Shortly after, the pilot transmitted a second call, again asking for the distance to the airport. About 1550, the pilot of another airplane observed black smoke and diverted to the area. That pilot located the accident site about 4 nautical miles northwest of CGC and reported the accident airplane was engulfed in smoke and fire.

A witness on a boat in the Crystal River area reported seeing the accident airplane flying low and fast, with both engines operating normally. The airplane’s left wing dipped sharply, and it entered a spiraling descent. The airplane completed two revolutions before descending behind trees, followed by a plume of smoke and an explosion.

The airplane came to rest in a heavily wooded, swampy area about 4 nautical miles northwest of CGC. All major components of the airplane were located at the accident site. The cockpit and instrument panel were destroyed by impact forces and postimpact fire. Both wings remained attached to the fuselage and showed significant impact and fire damage.

The left engine remained attached to the wing and exhibited impact and fire damage. A 10-inch hole was observed on the engine crankcase above the No. 5 cylinder. The Nos. 5 and 6

connecting rods were separated from their pistons and broken connecting rod fragments were located inside the engine case. The propeller had separated from the crankshaft flange and was in the blades appeared to be in a feathered position.

The right engine also remained attached to the wing and showed signs of impact and fire damage. No evidence of catastrophic failure was observed. The propeller remained attached to the crankshaft flange and exhibited rotational scoring and gradual aft bending.

The airplane was recovered and retained for further examination.

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Beech	Registration:	N5868S
Model/Series:	95 B55	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Amateur Built:			
Operator:	On file	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:	CGC,9 ft msl	Observation Time:	19:55 Local
Distance from Accident Site:	4 Nautical Miles	Temperature/Dew Point:	31°C /23°C
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:	8 knots / , 280°
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility:	10 miles
Altimeter Setting:	29.88 inches Hg	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Departure Point:	Venice, FL (VNC)	Destination:	

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Fatal	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Passenger Injuries:		Aircraft Fire:	On-ground
Ground Injuries:		Aircraft Explosion:	Unknown
Total Injuries:	1 Fatal	Latitude, Longitude:	28,-82 (est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Alleyne, Eric
Additional Participating Persons:	Peter Basili; Textron Aviation; Wichita, KS Ismael G Reyes; FAA/FSDO; Tampa, FL Les Doud; Hartzell Propeller; Piqua, OH
Investigation Class:	Class 3
Note:	