National Transportation Safety Board
Aviation Accident Preliminary Report

Location:	Henderson, KY	**Accident Number:**	ERA19FA155
Date & Time:	04/23/2019,	**Registration:**	N9693E
Aircraft:	Bellanca 1730	**Injuries:**	2 Fatal
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

On April 23, 2019 at an unknown time, a Bellanca 17-30A, N9693E, was substantially damaged after impacting terrain at the Henderson City-County airport (EHR) Henderson, Kentucky. The student pilot and passenger were fatally injured. Night visual meteorological conditions prevailed, and no flight plan was filed for the personal flight, which was conducted under the provisions of Title 14 Code of Federal Regulations Part 91. The flight departed from Mid Carolina Regional airport (RUQ), Salisbury, North Carolina.

According to the airplane owner, the airplane was for sale and the student pilot was interested in purchasing it. The student pilot had flown the airplane earlier in the day with a flight instructor. According to the student pilot's logbook, he and the instructor flew a cross-country flight from RUQ, to Spartanburg Memorial airport (SPA), Spartanburg, South Carolina, and back to RUQ. The flight time was logged as 1.4 hours.

Airport personnel at HER discovered the airplane shortly before 0700 central daylight time on April 24, 2019, as they prepared to open the airport. The airplane was in a grass area about midfield, 200 ft left of the runway 27 centerline. The airport had closed the previous evening at 1930. When closed, the pilot controllable runway lighting remains activated on its "low" setting, and the airport rotating beacon remains on from sunset to sunrise.

No eyewitnesses were identified; however, the state police received several calls the following day from witnesses who reported hearing either a low flying airplane or a "boom" sound at times between 2000 and 2230 on April 23, 2019.

Examination of the wreckage revealed that all major components of the airplane were present at the accident site and were confined to an area approximately 100 ft in diameter. The right wing leading edge was fragmented and separated from the wing, and found within a ground scar that was embedded in the grass oriented about 270° magnetic. The propeller hub was separated from the engine with all three blades attached, and was embedded in the mud oriented about 90° nose down near the inboard section of the right wing leading edge. The fuselage came to rest about 15 ft south of the right wing leading edge fragments, and was oriented perpendicular to the runway. The right wing was fractured about midspan with the outboard section partially separated. The two aluminum fuel tank cells in the right wing were damaged, but largely intact. Blue stains were found on the wood wing components below and forward of the tanks and surrounding the tank vent and the fuel quantity sensor. About 3 to 4 gallons of fuel was recovered from the right wing tanks. A placard on the tank filler neck read "34 GAL. 30 GAL. USABLE."

The fuel selector valve was found in the "RIGHT" tank position.

The left wing was largely intact. The fuel tanks were not damaged. About 2 ounces of fuel were recovered after pressurizing the tanks with air at the filler neck. The forward fuselage was largely crush damaged and partially separated at the leading edge of the wing. The auxiliary fuel tank located behind the rear seats was undamaged and was devoid of fuel. Flight control continuity was established from all primary flight control surfaces to their respective cockpit controls. Pitch trim control continuity was established from the trim tab to the damaged roof area of the cockpit. The empennage largely undamaged. The landing gear handle was in the "down" position and both main landing gear were extended with the doors open. The nose landing gear was damaged and partially extended. There was no evidence of a post-crash fire.

All four engine mounts were fractured, and the engine was separated from the fuselage. The oil sump was crush damaged and breached near the drain plug, and a puddle of oil was found underneath the engine. The top spark plugs were removed and the No. 1 through No. 4 plugs exhibited light grey colored combustion deposits, the Nos. 5 and 6 plugs exhibited darker black colored combustion deposits. All electrodes exhibited normal wear signatures when compared to the Champion Check-A-Plug chart. The fuel pump remained attached to the engine; the drive coupling was intact, and a few drops of fuel leaked from the fractured pump inlet fitting when the pump was removed from the engine. After priming, the fuel pump operated normally when turned with an electric drill. The fuel nozzles were removed and found to be free of obstruction. The engine was rotated by hand at the propeller flange using a leverage tool. Thumb compression and suction was observed on all six cylinders with proper valve movement established. Continuity throughout the engine and accessory section was established. Both magnetos were found separated from their mounting pads with their mounting flanges fractured. Both produced impulse coupling engagement and spark on all towers when rotated by hand. The fuel manifold valve was disassembled; the diaphragm was intact with no indication of leakage, the plunger and retaining nut were tight and secure, the fuel screen was clean, and the cavity contained a small amount of fuel. The air induction tubes were crush damaged. The air filter was not found. The throttle body and mixture control assembly was separated from the engine and remained near the firewall with the throttle and mixture control attached to their respective control arms.

The low-wing, 4-seat, high-performance complex airplane was manufactured in 1976. It was equipped with a 300-horsepower Continental IO-520K1A engine driving a Hartzell 3-bladed controllable pitch propeller.

According to Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) airman records, the pilot held a student pilot certificate which was issued on February 9, 2018, with the standard limitation of "Carrying Passengers is Prohibited." According to his logbook, he had accumulated 24 hours of total flight experience, of which 23 hours were annotated as dual received, including 1.4 hours in the accident airplane. The logbook did not contain any endorsements for solo flight, or for operation of complex/high performance airplanes.

A preliminary review of weather conditions in the area overnight revealed some precipitation in the region between from 1900 and 2200 on April 23, 2019, and again between 0100 and 0200 on April 24, 2019. Visibility was consistently reported as 10 statute miles, with the skies clear or with scattered to broken cloud layers above 3,800 ft.

The airplane was retained for further examination.

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Bellanca	**Registration:**	N9693E

Model/Series:	1730	**Aircraft Category:**	Airplane
Amateur Built:	No		
Operator:	On file	**Operating Certificate(s) Held:**	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual Conditions	**Condition of Light:**	Night
Observation Facility, Elevation:		**Observation Time:**	
Distance from Accident Site:		**Temperature/Dew Point:**	
Lowest Cloud Condition:		**Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:**	/ ,
Lowest Ceiling:		**Visibility**	
Altimeter Setting:		**Type of Flight Plan Filed:**	None
Departure Point:	Salisbury, NC (RUQ)	**Destination:**	

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Fatal	**Aircraft Damage:**	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	1 Fatal	**Aircraft Fire:**	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	**Aircraft Explosion:**	None
Total Injuries:	2 Fatal	**Latitude, Longitude:**	37.807222, -87.684444

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Douglass P Brazy
Additional Participating Persons:	Silvestro Mumfrey; FAA/FSDO; Louisville, KY
Note:	The NTSB traveled to the scene of this accident.