## National Transportation Safety Board Washington, DC 20594

## **Brief of Accident**

## Adopted 01/16/2003

MIA02LA054

File No. 12613 01/26/2002 Immokalee, FL Aircraft Reg No. None Time (Local): 12:42 EST Make/Model: Quitzau, Carl / Vortex Fatal Serious Minor/None Engine Make/Model: Rotax / 582 Crew 0 1 0 Aircraft Damage: Substantial Pass 0 0 0 Number of Engines: 1 Operating Certificate(s): None Type of Flight Operation: Personal Reg. Flight Conducted Under: Part 91: General Aviation Last Depart, Point: Same as Accident/Incident Location Condition of Light: Day Destination: Local Flight Weather Info Src: Weather Observation Facility Airport Proximity: On Airport/Airstrip Basic Weather: Visual Conditions Airport Name: Immokalee Lowest Ceiling: None Runway Identification: Unk/Nr Visibility: 10.00 SM Wind Dir/Speed: Variable / 005 Kts Runway Length/Width (Ft): Unk/Nr Runway Surface: Unknown Temperature (°C): 29

Pilot-in-Command

Age: 48

Runway Surface Condition: Unknown

Certificate(s)/Rating(s)
Private; Single-engine Land

Instrument Ratings None Flight Time (Hours)

Precip/Obscuration:

Total All Aircraft: 2000 Last 90 Days: Unk/Nr Total Make/Model: Unk/Nr Total Instrument Time: UnK/Nr

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The accident occurred during the third flight of the day, and according to a witness, before beginning the first flight of the day, the accident pilot installed the main rotor blades. The first flight lasted approximately 10 minutes. After landing, the accident pilot reported to the witness that he encountered, "stick shake" during the flight. The accident pilot adjusted the main rotor blades then departed on the second flight which lasted approximately 20 minutes. The witness reported that the accident pilot advised with words to the effect that during the second flight, the gyroplane was flying a little better. The accident pilot performed a slight adjustment to the main rotor blades and fueled the fuel tank to about 3/4 capacity. The flight then departed, returned, and when flying approximately 50 feet above ground level, at an estimated airspeed of between 55 and 60 mph; the pilot's feet were observed outside the cockpit. When the flight was near the witness' position, the gyroplane began a gradual yaw to the left. The gyroplane then rolled left to an inverted position, pitched nose down, and impacted the ground. The witness reported he did not hear a change in engine sound from the time the gyrocraft was flying near his position to the time the gyrocraft began yawing and he did not perceive an engine malfunction. The gyroplane was not registered with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), though the designer reported it should have been registered with the FAA. The gyroplane impacted a grassy area near the approach end of runway 36 between the runway and taxiway on a heading of 030 degrees, traveled 6 feet, and came to rest 180 degrees from the initial impact heading. Ground scars from both rotor blades were Two of the three propeller blades were found separated, the third propeller blade remained secured. Examination of the gyroplane following recovery by the FAA inspector-in-charge (FAA-IIC) revealed evidence that the gyroplane impacted the ground with the nose; there was no evidence of preimpact mechanical failure. Examination of the flight controls revealed no evidence of preimpact failure or malfunction. The gyroplane had been operated for 3.3 hours since new at the time of the accident.

## Brief of Accident (Continued)

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Occurrence #1:

LOSS OF CONTROL - IN FLIGHT

Phase of Operation: CRUISE

**Findings** 

1. (C) DIRECTIONAL CONTROL - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND

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Occurrence #2: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER

Phase of Operation: DESCENT - UNCONTROLLED

Findings

2. TERRAIN CONDITION - GROUND

Findings Legend: (C) = Cause, (F) = Factor

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident as follows.

The failure of the pilot to maintain directional control of the gyroplane resulting in the in-flight loss of control and subsequent in-flight collision with terrain.