Aviation Safety Investigation Report 198501416

Sander Veenstra "Rustler"

6 March 1985

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NOTE: All air safety occurrences reported to the ATSB are categorised and recorded. For a detailed explanation on Category definitions please refer to the ATSB website at www.atsb.gov.au.

Occurrence Number: 198501416 **Occurrence Type:** Accident
Location: 5 Km SSE of Nagambie VIC
Date: 6 March 1985 **Time:** 730
Highest Injury Level: Fatal
Injuries:

	Fatal	Serious	Minor	None
Crew	1	0	0	0
Ground	0	0	0	-
Passenger	0	0	0	0
Total	**1**	**0**	**0**	**0**

Aircraft Details: Sander Veenstra "Rustler"
Registration: Not Reg
Serial Number:
Operation Type: Test Flight
Damage Level: Destroyed
Departure Point: 5 Km SSE of Nagambie VIC
Departure Time: 0730
Destination: 5 Km SSE of Nagambie VIC

Approved for Release: 20th August, 1985

Circumstances:

The owner/pilot had been designing and building ultralight aircraft for a number of years. This particular aircraft had been designed for a nosewheel landing gear system, however after flying the aircraft the pilot decided that he did not like this particular configuration. He decided to modify the aircraft to a tailwheel design, and had spent a considerable time over the preceding weeks on the rebuilding program. After completing the work the pilot was forced to wait for several days for suitable weather conditions in which to carry out the first flight. On the morning of the accident the pilot carried out a pre-flight inspection before taxying to the end of the strip in use. He was observed to exercise the controls prior to commencing the take-off. The aircraft became airborne after a ground run of about 125 metres, and the angle of climb was seen to progressively increase. At a height of about 80 feet above the ground the left wing dropped and the aircraft dived steeply to the ground. An inspection of the wreckage revealed that the ailerons had been incorrectly designed and were operating in the reverse sense. It was considered possible that the pilot may have been momentarily confused when the aileron response was not as expected, and may not have noticed the steepening nose attitude in time to take corrective measures. In this design the pilot sat in a totally exposed position at the front of the aircraft, and had only limited pitch references. The pilot had not flown a totally open cockpit aircraft for some considerable time, and was not wearing goggles. Apart from the aileron problem no other faults were found during the investigation. During his pre-flight checks the pilot had evidently not detected that the ailerons operated in the reverse sense.