

Plane crash claims lives of four Nashville residents

Private aircraft crashes in southwest Kentucky, lone survivor walks away to find help

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EDDYVILLE, Ky. — Several members of a Nashville family have perished after their private airplane crashed on Friday evening in southwest Kentucky.

The plane was headed to Mt. Vernon, Ill., from Key West, Fla., on Friday evening when it crashed near Eddyville, Ky.,

according to the Federal Aviation Administration.

According to a statement from FAA officials, air traffic controllers received a report of engine trouble from a small Piper PA-34 then lost contact with the aircraft at approximately 5:55 p.m. Friday as the plane flew over southwestern Kentucky.

Marty Gutzler, 49; Kimberly Gutzler, 45; their daughter, Piper Gutzler, 9; and their niece, Sierra Wilder, 14, all of Nashville, died as a result of injuries sustained in the crash. The name of the 7-year-old passenger is being withheld by authorities at the request of the family.

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Kentucky State Police (KSP) released a statement on the status of the 7-year-old shortly after the accident occurred Friday.

According to Sgt. Dean Patterson of Kentucky State Police Post 1, at approximately 6:30 p.m., a 911 call was received from a Lyon County resident, who told police that a 7-year-old female had walked to him, reporting that she had been involved in a plane crash.

The child was reported to be in distress and was transported to Lourdes Hospital in Paducah, Ky., for non-life threatening injuries. She was released early Saturday, according to KSP reports.

According to a report by the Associated Press, the child had trekked about a mile without shoes in near-freezing temperatures in order to seek help.

When the child cleared the patch of woods where the crash occurred, she knocked on the door of the first house she came across, the house of Larry Wilkins in Kuttawa, Ky., the report continues.

"I come to the door and there's a little girl, 7 years old, bloody nose, bloody arms, bloody legs, one sock, no shoes, crying," Wilkins told the Associated Press on Saturday. "She told me that

her mom and dad were dead, and she had been in a plane crash, and the plane was upside down."

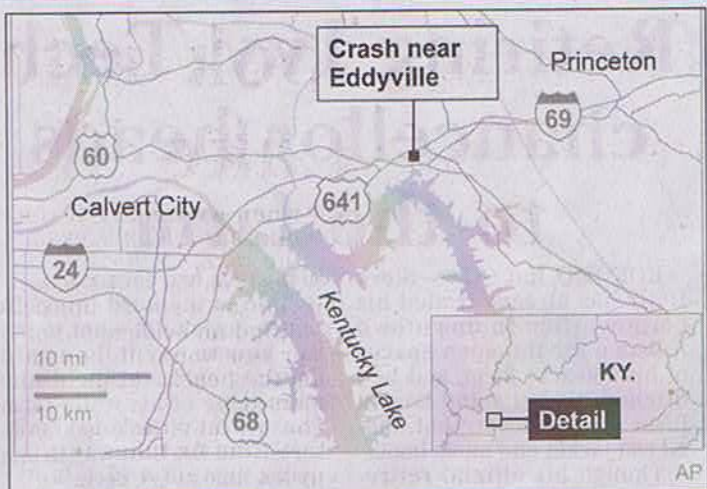
KSP later confirmed that the child was the daughter of the pilot, Marty Gutzler and his wife Kimberly Gutzler, though the child's name was not being released.

The bodies of the four victims were reported to be transported to a Louisville, Ky., hospital for autopsies.

Patterson also addressed the initial report of trouble early Friday evening, at which time the scene of the wreck had not yet been located.

"FAA Memphis Center has confirmed a distress call from a private aircraft in the vicinity of the reported crash," said Patterson.

As the night carried on, Patterson and KSP continued to make updates as information became available.



The plane, described as a fixed wing multiple engine aircraft, was found in a wooded area off of Kentucky Route 810 South in Lyon County, Ky.

Investigators with the National Transportation Safety Board were expected to arrive at the crash site on Saturday.

According to a report by the Associated Press, Marty Gutzler ran the furniture store that his father started, and he and his wife were well-known and well-liked in the Nashville community.

"All the kids in the neighborhood are just so upset about this," a neighbor told the Associated Press.

The neighbor explained how close the survivor was to her now deceased older sister.

"That's what's going to be so devastating for the little one," she said.

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AP Photo.

NEAR THE ACCIDENT — The home of Larry Wilkins sits nestled in the woods Saturday in Kuttawa, Ky. A plane crashed in the woods beside his home and a 7-year-old girl, the lone survivor of the crash, walked approximately three quarters of a mile to the house where Wilkins called for assistance.