



We are saddened to report that veteran air race pilot and former Continental pilot Sherman Smoot has flown West. He was killed when his modified aircraft lost power after takeoff in Kern County, CA on Friday, September 2. The plane was a Yakovlev YAK-11, an aircraft used by the Soviet Air Force from 1947 until 1962, nicknamed "Czech Mate." It was reportedly being rebuilt in preparation for the upcoming Reno Air Races.

There are conflicting and unresolved reports that Sherman attempted to return to the airport when the engine failed shortly after takeoff, experiencing a stall and consequently entering an unrecoverable spin, impacting a plowed field adjacent to the airport. Other reports point out that due to the greatly modified flight characteristics of this aircraft, such as the large prop and engine, heavy wing loading and overall difficulty of flying this aircraft, an engine seizure right after takeoff would likely cause the aircraft to encounter a severe bank and yaw condition which would likely be unrecoverable at such a low altitude. The National Transportation and Safety Board is investigating the accident and any assumptions about the cause of this unfortunate accident should be avoided until the official

report is issued.

The Golden Eagles sends condolences to Sherman`s family and we are sincerely sorry for your sudden loss. We hope you can find peace and comfort in the knowledge that Sherman flew West while doing what he loved.

Additional details will be provided as they are received.



Sherman Smoot

1948-2022

Click on the link below for access to a local news article regarding the fatal crash:

<https://www.ksby.com/news/local-news/veteran-pilot-killed-in-vintage-airplane-crash-in-kern-county>



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