

Debris from downed spaceship found 35 miles away

November 4 2014, by Justin Pritchard



In this Nov. 1, 2014, photo provided by the National Transportation Safety Board, Virgin Galactic pilot Todd Ericson, right, talks with NTSB Acting Chairman Christopher A. Hart, second from left, at the SpaceShipTwo accident site with investigators in Mojave, Calif. The cause of Friday's crash of Virgin Galactic's SpaceShipTwo has not been determined, but investigators found the "feathering" system, which rotates the tail to create drag, was activated before the craft reached the appropriate speed, National Transportation Safety Board Acting Chairman Christopher Hart said. (AP Photo/NTSB)

Federal accident investigators say that tiny pieces of an experimental spaceship that broke up in flight have been found 35 miles from the main wreckage area.

Acting National Transportation Safety Board Chairman Christopher Hart said Monday the parts recovered were small enough to have been blown that far by the wind.

The NTSB is moving parts from the Mojave Desert into hangars as it continues its investigation into Friday's demise of Virgin Galactic's space tourism craft.

The agency has not concluded what shattered the aircraft, killing one pilot and injuring the other.

Initial results show that a system to slow the space plane's descent deployed too soon.

Hart clarified that he did not know which of the pilots unlocked the craft's feathering system, which rotates the twin tail sections upright to create drag during re-entry.

Investigators believe once the feathers were unlocked, "[aerodynamic forces](#)" buffeting the craft at the speed of sound caused the feathers to start rotating.



In this Nov. 1, 2014, photo provided by the National Transportation Safety Board, Virgin Galactic pilot Todd Ericson, left, talks with NTSB Acting Chairman Christopher A. Hart, right, at SpaceShipTwo accident site with investigators in Mojave, Calif. The cause of Friday's crash of Virgin Galactic's SpaceShipTwo has not been determined, but investigators found the "feathering" system, which rotates the tail to create drag, was activated before the craft reached the appropriate speed, National Transportation Safety Board Acting Chairman Christopher Hart said. (AP Photo/NTSB)



In this Nov. 2, 2014, photo provided by the National Transportation Safety Board, NTSB investigators stands with the WhiteKnightTwo in Virgin Galactic's hangar in Mojave, Calif. The cause of Friday's crash of Virgin Galactic's SpaceShipTwo has not been determined, but investigators found the "feathering" system, which rotates the tail to create drag, was activated before the craft reached the appropriate speed, National Transportation Safety Board Acting Chairman Christopher Hart said. (AP Photo/NTSB)



This Nov. 2, 2014, photo provided by the National Transportation Safety Board shows Lorenda Ward, investigator in charge of the SpaceShipTwo accident, in the spaceship company's production facility, Mojave, Calif. The cause of Friday's crash of Virgin Galactic's SpaceShipTwo has not been determined, but investigators found the "feathering" system, which rotates the tail to create drag, was activated before the craft reached the appropriate speed, National Transportation Safety Board Acting Chairman Christopher Hart said. (AP Photo/NTSB)

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