

Round-The-World Pilot Crashes In Desert



British pilot Tracey Curtis-Taylor in crash in Arizona desert

British pilot Tracey Curtis-Taylor and a passenger have survived after her biplane crashed to the ground and cartwheeled across the Arizona desert during a round-the-world flight tour.

The 53-year-old was flying to Phoenix after refuelling in Winslow with Ewald Gritsch when her 1942 Boeing Stearman biplane developed problems shortly after take-off.

Ms Curtis-Taylor, who began circumnavigating the globe in the Spirit of Artemis in 2013, blamed high density altitude and a partial loss of power for the crash.

Writing on her Facebook page, she said: "I am stricken to announce that my flight across the US has been cut short following a crash in the Arizona desert.

"The accident happened a couple of days ago as we were flying to Phoenix in Arizona after refuelling and taking off from Winslow.

"The Spirit of Artemis then started to sink which was not a great scenario with power lines directly ahead but thankfully there was open desert to the south.

"It hit the ground and rolled forward about twenty feet but then the right wheel struck a dense sage root mound which tore off the right landing gear and threw the plane on to its left wing. It then cartwheeled tail over the nose in a cloud of sand and dust."

The aircraft, which was part way through a journey from Seattle to Boston in a recreation of the pioneering US postal flights, suffered extensive damage.

Ms Curtis-Taylor said she intends to repair the aircraft and will then return to Winslow next year to complete the journey.

She added: "I am devastated by all of this and profoundly sorry that I won't be able to finish the flight, at least not this year.

"Amazingly, I have been offered another Stearman to complete the flight but I have such a deep attachment to the Spirit of Artemis and we have come such a long way together that I cannot contemplate doing it in anything else."

Last year, Ms Curtis-Taylor recreated British pilot Amy Johnson's 1930 flight from England to Australia.

Extracted from:

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