

Aerobatic Pilot Survives Extreme Failure

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South African airshow pilot Nigel Hopkins, who is in France getting prepared for the 28th FAI World Aerobatic Championships, is fortunate to be alive after his MX Aircraft MX2 airplane broke up in flight.

Hopkins was on a practice flight in preparation for the competition, which is set to take place August 20 through 29 in Châteauroux, France.

La Nouvelle Republic reported that the engine and right wing separated from the carbon fiber airplane for unknown reasons. According to South African news outlet *Netwerk 24*, the engine and propeller departed the fuselage and hit the right wing of the MX2. **Though the catastrophic failure happened in seconds and Hopkins was practicing at only a few hundred feet of altitude, he was quick enough to eject and pull the parachute in time to safely return to the ground.**

Hopkins responded to an outpouring of well wishing messages from friends and fans on Facebook. "Just to let everyone know that I'm ok," he said. "Many asking questions, until we have more info basically my aircraft broke in flight at the start of an aerobatic sequence and I managed to bail out and parachute safely."

The French Bureau of Investigation and Analysis (BEA) is investigating the cause of the accident.

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