



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Final Report

Location:	BRYAN, TX	Accident Number:	FTW97LA054
Date & Time:	12/02/1996, 1545 CST	Registration:	N290SB
Aircraft:	Let L23	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	1 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

Analysis

According to the pilot, the glider was released from the tow plane at 3,000 feet. After soaring for approximately 25 minutes in the vicinity of the airport, he maneuvered the glider to land on runway 17. The pilot added that on final approach, at approximately 250 feet AGL, 'the sail plane encountered a sink' and he realized that he would not be able to clear power lines at the approach end of the runway. The pilot stated that he elected to execute an 'off airport landing' in a field north of his position. The pilot turned right and executed a downwind landing with a 15 knot tailwind in the field that he had selected. During the landing roll, the root of the glider's right wing impacted a fence post.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: the pilot misjudged his distance and altitude during the landing approach. Factors relating to the accident were: the high obstructions (power lines), and subsequent tailwind during the forced landing.

Findings

Occurrence #1: ON GROUND/WATER COLLISION WITH OBJECT
Phase of Operation: LANDING

Findings

1. (C) DISTANCE/ALTITUDE - MISJUDGED - PILOT IN COMMAND
2. (F) TERRAIN CONDITION - HIGH OBSTRUCTION(S)
3. MANEUVER TO AVOID OBSTRUCTIONS - PERFORMED - PILOT IN COMMAND
4. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - TAILWIND
5. (F) OBJECT - FENCE POST

Factual Information

On December 2, 1996, at 1545 central standard time, a Let L23 glider, N290SB, was substantially damaged while landing near Bryan, Texas. The glider, owned and operated by West Wings Aviation of Bryan, Texas, was being operated under Title 14 CFR Part 91. The commercial pilot, sole occupant of the aircraft, was not injured. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed for the personal local flight for which a flight plan was not filed. The glider departed in tow from Coulter Field at 1515.

According to the pilot, the glider was released from the tow plane at 3,000 feet. After soaring for approximately 25 minutes in the vicinity of the airport, he maneuvered the glider to land on runway 17. The pilot added that on final approach, at approximately 250 feet AGL, "the sail plane encountered a sink" and he realized that he would not be able to reach the airport and clear the power lines at the approach end of the runway.

The pilot stated that he elected to execute an "off airport landing" in a field north of his position. The pilot turned right and executed a downwind landing in the field he selected. The pilot added that the 15 knot tailwind substantially increased the glider's ground speed and ground roll. During the landing roll, the root of the glider's right wing impacted a fence post resulting in a loss of control.

Post accident examination of the glider by the operator revealed structural damage to the airframe as well as the right wing. The pilot stated that the winds at the time of the accident were from 180 degrees at 15 knots.

The commercial pilot was rated in single and multi-engine airplanes. He was properly endorsed by a flight instructor for solo flights in the glider and had accumulated a total of 8.9 hours in gliders, of which 4 hours were solo.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial	Age:	28, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Multi-engine Land; Single-engine Land	Seat Occupied:	Front
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	Seatbelt, Shoulder harness
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 2 Valid Medical--no waivers/lim.	Last FAA Medical Exam:	09/01/1995
Occupational Pilot:		Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	642 hours (Total, all aircraft), 9 hours (Total, this make and model), 580 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 85 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 44 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 1 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Let	Registration:	N290SB
Model/Series:	L23 L23	Aircraft Category:	Glider
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	No
Airworthiness Certificate:	Utility	Serial Number:	938029
Landing Gear Type:	Retractable - Tailwheel	Seats:	2
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	03/31/1996, Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	1124 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	51 Hours	Engines:	Unknown
Airframe Total Time:	443 Hours	Engine Manufacturer:	
ELT:	Not installed	Engine Model/Series:	
Registered Owner:	GARY GANDY & PAUL NABORS	Rated Power:	
Operator:	GARY GANDY & PAUL NABORS	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None
Operator Does Business As:	WEST WING AVIATION	Operator Designator Code:	

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual Conditions	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	, 0 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	0 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	0000	Direction from Accident Site:	0°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear / 0 ft agl	Visibility	10 Miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None / 0 ft agl	Visibility (RVR):	0 ft
Wind Speed/Gusts:	15 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	180°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:		Temperature/Dew Point:	18° C
Precipitation and Obscuration:			
Departure Point:	(CFD)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	(CFD)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	1515 CST	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 None	Latitude, Longitude:	

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC): HECTOR R CASANOVA **Report Date:** 04/03/1997

Additional Participating Persons: ARTHUR RINDNER; HOUSTON, TX

Publish Date:

Investigation Docket: NTSB accident and incident dockets serve as permanent archival information for the NTSB's investigations. Dockets released prior to June 1, 2009 are publicly available from the NTSB's Record Management Division at pubinq@ntsb.gov, or at 800-877-6799. Dockets released after this date are available at <http://dms.nts.gov/pubdms/>.

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