



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Final Report

Location:	FRIENDLY, MD	Accident Number:	NYC99LA134
Date & Time:	06/02/1999, 0937 EDT	Registration:	N555L
Aircraft:	Saliba LONG EZ	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Defining Event:		Injuries:	1 Fatal

Flight Conducted Under: Part 91: General Aviation - Personal

Analysis

Another pilot in the airport traffic pattern saw the accident airplane, and requested the accident pilot's intentions. There was no response, but the accident airplane appeared to enter a right base for the active runway. The airplane overshot the runway, then turned back, and entered a left base for the same runway. It overshot the final approach course, but corrected with a steep turn, and continued making 'S' turns during the final approach. The airplane then pitched up and mashed into trees about 200 yards short of the runway. The airplane's canopy was found about 2 miles from the accident scene, and the latching mechanism exhibited no sign of overstress, or of being latched. Another owner of a Long EZ stated that the airplane would have been difficult to control without a canopy.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The separation of the airplane canopy for undetermined reasons, the diminished controllability of the airplane, and the pilot's failure to maintain airspeed resulting in a stall/mush into trees short of the runway.

Findings

Occurrence #1: AIRFRAME/COMPONENT/SYSTEM FAILURE/MALFUNCTION
Phase of Operation: CRUISE

Findings

1. WINDOW,CANOPY - UNLATCHED
2. WINDOW,CANOPY - SEPARATION
3. REASON FOR OCCURRENCE UNDETERMINED

Occurrence #2: UNDERSHOOT
Phase of Operation: EMERGENCY DESCENT/LANDING

Findings

4. PRECAUTIONARY LANDING - ATTEMPTED - PILOT IN COMMAND

Occurrence #3: LOSS OF CONTROL - IN FLIGHT
Phase of Operation: EMERGENCY DESCENT/LANDING

Findings

5. AIRCRAFT CONTROL - DIMINISHED
6. AIRSPEED(VS) - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND
7. STALL/MUSH - ENCOUNTERED - PILOT IN COMMAND

Occurrence #4: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH OBJECT
Phase of Operation: EMERGENCY DESCENT/LANDING

Findings

8. OBJECT - TREE(S)

Factual Information

On June 2, 1999, at 0937 Eastern Daylight Time, a homebuilt Long EZ, N555L, was destroyed during an emergency approach to Potomac Airfield (VKX), Friendly, Maryland. The certificated private pilot was fatally injured. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed at the time of the accident. No flight plan was filed for the flight, between Washington Executive/Hyde Field (W32), Clinton, Maryland, and Middle Georgia Regional Airport (MCN), Macon, Georgia. The personal flight was conducted under 14 CFR Part 91.

According to witnesses, the airplane departed Clinton about 0830, and was later seen north of Potomac Airfield, flying low. Another pilot in the traffic pattern at Potomac saw the accident airplane, and requested the pilot's intentions. There was no response, but the accident airplane appeared to enter a right base for Runway 24. The airplane overshot the runway, then turned back, and entered a left base for the same runway. It overshot the final approach course, but corrected with a steep turn, and "continued making 'S' turns down final approach. [It] started getting very close to the trees; I could see [the] shadow almost touch the plane." The airplane then "pitched up...and mashed down into trees about 200 yards short of 24. It appeared the prop was windmilling a few seconds before [the airplane] hit the trees."

According to a Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Inspector, cut trees were found leading to the wreckage, one blade of the wooden propeller was fractured while the other had split a small tree trunk, and fuel was found onboard the airplane. The airplane's canopy was found about 2 miles away, in the Potomac River.

The inspector further stated:

"There were no visible marks or concerns pertinent to the canopy or latching mechanism.... The latching mechanism operated normally - the safety latch appeared functional. The screw holes on [the] canopy hinges were enlarged due to screws that were pulled through holes when canopy separated from aircraft."

Another Long EZ owner informed the Inspector that the latching mechanism consisted of three latches with a safety lock. He also noted that a Long EZ would be difficult to control without a canopy.

Maintenance information about the airplane was not recovered.

Winds, reported at an airport 6 nautical miles to the northeast, 14 minutes after the accident, were from 200 degrees magnetic, at 11 knots.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	86, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine Land	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	Seatbelt, Shoulder harness
Instrument Rating(s):	None	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 3 Valid Medical--w/ waivers/lim.	Last FAA Medical Exam:	10/26/1998
Occupational Pilot:		Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	2020 hours (Total, all aircraft), 450 hours (Total, this make and model), 15 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 6 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Saliba	Registration:	N555L
Model/Series:	LONG EZ LONG EZ	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	Yes
Airworthiness Certificate:	Experimental	Serial Number:	2143
Landing Gear Type:		Seats:	2
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	Unknown	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	1425 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:		Engine Manufacturer:	Lycoming
ELT:		Engine Model/Series:	O-235
Registered Owner:	NASEEM N. SALIBA	Rated Power:	115 hp
Operator:	NASEEM N. SALIBA	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual Conditions	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	DCA, 16 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	6 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	0951 EDT	Direction from Accident Site:	55°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Scattered / 14000 ft agl	Visibility	10 Miles
Lowest Ceiling:	Broken / 25000 ft agl	Visibility (RVR):	0 ft
Wind Speed/Gusts:	11 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	200°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	25° C / 16° C
Precipitation and Obscuration:			
Departure Point:	CLINTON, MD (W32)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	MACON, GA (MCN)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	0830 EDT	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Airport Information

Airport:	POTOMAC AIRFIELD (VKX)	Runway Surface Type:	Asphalt
Airport Elevation:	115 ft	Runway Surface Condition:	Dry
Runway Used:	24	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:	2665 ft / 40 ft	VFR Approach/Landing:	Forced Landing; Full Stop; Traffic Pattern

Wreckage and Impact Information

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

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	PAUL R COX	Report Date:	06/22/2000
Additional Participating Persons:	CHARLES LOUGHREY; DULLES, VA,		
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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