



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Final Report

Location:	OWENSBORO, KY	Accident Number:	ATL85LA204
Date & Time:	07/02/1985, 1940 CDT	Registration:	N1534C
Aircraft:	BALLOON WORKS FIREFLY 7	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	1 Serious, 2 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

Analysis

PILOT LAUNCHED BALLOON FROM COLLEGE CAMPUS WITH TWO PAX. FLEW FOR 35 MINUTES. DURING FLIGHT HE RADIOED GROUND CREW WHICH WAS AT LANDING SITE. DURING DESCENT PILOT SAW UTILITY WIRES PREVIOUSLY UNNOTICED. PARACHUTE WAS VENTD TO INCREASE DESCENT RATE AND AVOID WIRES. BALLOON LANDED HARD AND BOUNCED INTO WIRES. ELECTRICAL ARCING SEVERED BASKET CABLES DROPPING BASKET 20 FEET TO GROUND.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be:

Findings

Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH OBJECT
Phase of Operation: LANDING

Findings

1. OBJECT - WIRE, TRANSMISSION
2. (C) UNSAFE/HAZARDOUS CONDITION WARNING - NOT ISSUED - GROUND PERSONNEL

Factual Information

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial	Age:	, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	None	Seat Occupied:	Unknown
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	Balloon	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	None	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	None None	Last FAA Medical Exam:	
Occupational Pilot:		Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	208 hours (Total, all aircraft), 208 hours (Total, this make and model), 191 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 8 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	BALLOON WORKS	Registration:	N1534C
Model/Series:	FIREFLY 7 FIREFLY 7	Aircraft Category:	Balloon
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	No
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	10208
Landing Gear Type:	Retractable - Tricycle	Seats:	1
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	04/01/1985, 100 Hour	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	1660 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	10 Hours	Engines:	Unknown
Airframe Total Time:	195 Hours	Engine Manufacturer:	
ELT:	Not installed	Engine Model/Series:	
Registered Owner:	HUGH B. GILBERT	Rated Power:	
Operator:	HUGH B. GILBERT	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

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:	1940	Direction from Accident Site:	0°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Scattered / 10000 ft agl	Visibility	12 Miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None / 0 ft agl	Visibility (RVR):	0 ft
Wind Speed/Gusts:	5 knots / 8 knots	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	270°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:		Temperature/Dew Point:	27° C / -18° C
Precipitation and Obscuration:			
Departure Point:		Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:		Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	1905 CDT	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Airport Information

Airport:	UNKNOWN	Runway Surface Type:	Dirt
Airport Elevation:	0 ft	Runway Surface Condition:	Dry; Holes; Rough; Soft
Runway Used:	0	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:		VFR Approach/Landing:	Straight-in

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	1 Serious, 1 None	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 Serious, 2 None	Latitude, Longitude:	

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	PRESTON E HICKS	Report Date:	
Additional Participating Persons:			
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/ .		

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), established in 1967, is an independent federal agency mandated by Congress through the Independent Safety Board Act of 1974 to investigate transportation accidents, determine the probable causes of the accidents, issue safety recommendations, study transportation safety issues, and evaluate the safety effectiveness of government agencies involved in transportation. The NTSB makes public its actions and decisions through accident reports, safety studies, special investigation reports, safety recommendations, and statistical reviews.

The Independent Safety Board Act, as codified at 49 U.S.C. Section 1154(b), precludes the admission into evidence or use of any part of an NTSB report related to an incident or accident in a civil action for damages resulting from a matter mentioned in the report. A factual report that may be admissible under 49 U.S.C. § 1154(b) is available [here](#).