



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Final Report

Location:	Saratoga Springs, NY	Accident Number:	ERA15LA367
Date & Time:	09/19/2015, 1409 EDT	Registration:	N27XX
Aircraft:	SCHLEICHER ASW 19B	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:	Loss of control in flight	Injuries:	1 Serious
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The private pilot was attempting to land the glider. A witness described the glider's initial approach to the runway as "high and fast" and noted that the landing gear and spoilers were retracted. He added that the glider flew about halfway down the runway, climbed, turned right, and banked steeply before making a left "teardrop" turn. The glider then flew down the runway in the opposite direction. The landing gear extended and retracted at least once during the turn. The glider made a second low pass over the runway at an "excessive" speed but did not land. The glider then entered another climb and made a very steep descending left turn, and the left wing struck the ground followed by the nose. Data extracted from a GPS found in the wreckage were consistent with the witness's observations. The pilot was seriously injured and could not remember the accident sequence of events.

Postaccident examination of the wreckage revealed no evidence of any preimpact mechanical deficiencies that would have precluded normal operation of the glider.

Probable Cause and Findings

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

The pilot's failure to maintain glider control while attempting to land.

Findings

Aircraft	Performance/control parameters - Not attained/maintained (Cause)
Personnel issues	Aircraft control - Pilot (Cause)

Factual Information

On September 19, 2015, about 1409 eastern daylight time, a Schleicher ASW 19B glider, N27XX, was destroyed when it collided with terrain while attempting to land at Saratoga County Airport (5B2), Saratoga, New York. The private pilot was seriously injured. The glider was registered to and operated by the pilot as a 14 Code of Federal Regulations Part 91 personal flight. Visual meteorological conditions were reported and no flight plan was filed for the local flight. The flight originated at 5B2 about 1338.

A designated pilot examiner for the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) was at the airport and witnessed the accident. He stated that he first observed the glider when it was on final approach for runway 32. The glider was "high and fast," and the landing gear and spoilers were retracted. He said the glider flew about halfway down the runway, climbed, turned right. It then banked steeply, made a left "teardrop" turn, and flew down the runway in the opposite direction. The witness never saw the spoilers extend, but the landing gear did extend and retract at least once during the turn. The glider made a second low pass (below 100 ft) over the runway at an "excessive" speed, but did not land. The witness said the glider entered another climb, made a very steep left turn, and nearly missed colliding with a building. The glider descended while in the turn and the left wing struck the ground followed by the nose. The witness said, "To summarize, the glider basically flew from a starting altitude of less than 50 ft, made nearly two complete teardrop course reversals. The left wing struck the ground before completing the second. During this time, possibly as much as two minutes, the gear was extended and retracted at least once but I did not see the spoilers extend."

The pilot stated that he did not remember the accident flight.

Data contained in a FlyWithCE GPS found in the wreckage was consistent with the witness's statement. The data, which included latitude/longitude, altitude, and groundspeed, began recording at 1338:32 when the glider departed runway 32 and ended at 1409:10. After departure, the glider performed several turning maneuvers away from the airport before returning to land. When the airplane arrived back at the airport, it flew downwind for runway 32 before turning onto final approach. At 1407:53, at a groundspeed of 154 knots, the glider flew about halfway down runway 32, before making a right turn followed by a steep left turn back down the runway, but in the opposite direction. At 1408:53, at a groundspeed of 80 knots, the glider entered a descending left turn before the data ended at 1409:10.

Postaccident examination of the wreckage by an FAA inspector revealed that glider cart-wheeled and came to rest on the right side of the final approach path of runway 32, resulting in extensive impact damage to the glider's wings and fuselage. The landing gear and spoilers were retracted. No mechanical deficiencies were noted that would have precluded normal operation of the glider prior to the accident.

The pilot held a private pilot certificate with ratings for airplane single-engine land, airplane single-engine sea, and glider. The pilot reported a total of 310 hours of flight experience; of which 145 hours were in gliders, and 56 hours was in the same make/model as the accident glider. The pilot was not required to have an FAA-issued medical certificate to operate a glider.

Weather reported at Albany International Airport (ALB), Albany, New York, at 1351, located about 18 miles south of 5B2, included wind from 170 degrees at 11 knots gusting to 17 knots, visibility 10 miles, few clouds at 11,000 ft, scattered clouds at 23,000 and 28,000 ft, temperature 27 degrees C, dewpoint 14 degrees C, and a barometric altimeter setting of 29.87 inches of mercury.

History of Flight

Landing	Loss of control in flight (Defining event)
Uncontrolled descent	Collision with terr/obj (non-CFIT)

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private; Sport Pilot	Age:	66, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine Land; Single-engine Sea	Seat Occupied:	Center
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	Glider	Restraint Used:	Unknown
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:	No	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	04/25/2015
Flight Time:	310 hours (Total, all aircraft), 56 hours (Total, this make and model), 240 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 7 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 3 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	SCHLEICHER	Registration:	N27XX
Model/Series:	ASW 19B B	Aircraft Category:	Glider
Year of Manufacture:	1981	Amateur Built:	No
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	19356
Landing Gear Type:	Tailwheel	Seats:	2
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	Unknown	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	899 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	0
Airframe Total Time:		Engine Manufacturer:	
ELT:	Not installed	Engine Model/Series:	
Registered Owner:	On file	Rated Power:	
Operator:	On file	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual Conditions	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	ALB, 285 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	18 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	1351 EDT	Direction from Accident Site:	180°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Few / 5000 ft agl	Visibility	10 Miles
Lowest Ceiling:		Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	11 knots / 17 knots	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/ None
Wind Direction:	170°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	29.87 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	27° C / 17° C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Saratoga Springs, NY (5B2)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	Saratoga Springs, NY (5B2)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	1338 EDT	Type of Airspace:	Class E

Airport Information

Airport:	SARATOGA COUNTY (5B2)	Runway Surface Type:	Asphalt; Concrete
Airport Elevation:	433 ft	Runway Surface Condition:	Dry
Runway Used:	32	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:	4000 ft / 100 ft	VFR Approach/Landing:	Unknown

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Serious	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 Serious	Latitude, Longitude:	43.050833, -73.861667 (est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Leah D Read	Report Date:	07/26/2017
Additional Participating Persons:	Benjamin Gorey; FAA-FSDO; Syracuse, NY		
Publish Date:	07/26/2017		
Note:	The NTSB did not travel to the scene of this accident.		
Investigation Docket:	http://dms.ntsb.gov/pubdms/search/dockList.cfm?mKey=92026		

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](#).