



NTSB RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Lynn Spencer
Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region

Date: 08/08/2018
Person Contacted: Jeff Matthews (Glider Pilot)
NTSB Accident Number: ERA18LA211

The following is a summary of a conversation that occurred with the above-named individual:

- The glider pilot stated that the accident occurred on the 5th flight of the day from runway 28, and on the second flight with his glider student, who was on an introductory flight.
- He stated that they launched on the grass beside runway 28, though they normally use runway 19.
- He stated that all the runways they use have good obstacle clearance. They don't use runway 10 because the tree line is too close. He explained that by experience they know that when the tow airplane engine is running properly, even on a hot day, they clear the trees by about 100 feet. Further, he explained that if the tow airplane is not airborne by the intersecting runway, they would release from the tow plane but that has never happened.
- The glider pilot stated that prior to using a runway, they make a runway check with a golf cart to ensure that the runway is acceptable. If the golf cart leaves ruts in the turf, then that runway would be considered unacceptable. He explained that this was the big consideration for runway use, and that all runways at the airport are considered acceptable for glider use except for runway 10. He stated that on the day of the accident they got halfway down runway 1/19 on the golf cart and realized it would not work, so they ran the golf cart up and down runway 10/28 and determined it was acceptable.
- He reported that at the time of the flight, the wind sock was "not quite hanging limp."
- He stated he did not notice anything notably different on this takeoff compared to the earlier takeoffs except for that the tow airplane had become airborne about 100 ft sooner on takeoffs earlier in the day when it was cooler.
- On the accident flight, the tow airplane became airborne just before the intersection with Runway 19 but did not seem to be producing full power as they approached the tree line. He stated that coming up on the tree line, he released and turned away from the trees but hit the end of a clump of trees.



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- He stated that after the accident he checked the weather at KMTN, and about the time of the accident, the dewpoint was increasing, but that they seldom have carburetor ice problems with the Scout.



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Eastern Region

Date: 8/7/2018
Person Contacted: John Papier (Tow airplane pilot)
NTSB Accident Number: ERA18LA211

The following is a summary of a conversation that occurred with the above-named individual:

- The pilot of the tow airplane stated that he had towed the glider previously the day of the accident, and the takeoff had been normal. He stated that conditions were “the worst humidity and heat and slowest rate of flying” and that it had been a long takeoff roll.
- He stated that they would have normally used runway 19, which is into the wind and offers a longer runway, but it was water logged, so they were using Runway 28. Runway 28 was uphill and shorter, and it too had a few wet areas.
- The pilot stated that he felt they would clear the tree line by at least 20 feet, and that if he had had concerns he would have wagged his wings to let the glider pilot know, but that he did not have concerns. He stated that the glider pilot can cut off whenever he sees fit.
- The pilot explained that he kept the tow airplane low to build up airspeed and then started liftoff about 500 feet before the tree line. The climb out felt normal to the tow pilot, close to trees but nothing unusual where he would have to wave off. He noticed no airplane performance issues that concerned him. He felt the glider drop off and he looked back to see it turning toward a farm field. He came back around and landed and saw that they were okay. The glider pilot mentioned to him that perhaps they got a downdraft or perhaps there was carburetor icing in the tow aircraft engine.



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Lynn Spencer
Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region

Date: 08/09/2018
Person Contacted: John Papier, tow airplane pilot
NTSB Accident Number: ERA18LA211

The following is a summary of a conversation that occurred with the above-named individual:

- The pilot of the tow airplane stated that he and the glider pilot made the decision several weeks before the accident they would only fly with one person in the glider on days with high density altitude.
- He stated that they did not do this on the day of the accident because they had not had any problems on previous flights that day.