



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	BUCHANAN, Virginia	Accident Number:	BF091LA034
Date & Time:	March 24, 1991, 14:45 Local	Registration:	N2451W
Aircraft:	SCHWEIZER SGS 2-33	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	1 Serious, 1 Minor
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

THE GLIDER WAS BEING TOWED AND DURING THE TAKEOFF CLIMB THE PILOT RELEASED FROM THE TOWPLANE. THE PILOT INDICATED HE RELEASED BECAUSE THE TOWPLANE ENCOUNTERED A DOWNDRAFT AND HE FELT THE GLIDER WOULD NOT CLEAR THE TREES AHEAD. THE GLIDER PILOT REPORTED THAT AFTER HE RELEASED FROM THE TOWPLANE, HE TURNED RIGHT TO AVOID THE TREES; HOWEVER, THERE WAS NO SUITABLE LANDING AREA AND THE GLIDER COLLIDED WITH THE TREES.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: THE PILOT'S DECISION TO ATTEMPT THE TAKEOFF WITH UNFAVORABLE WINDS.

Findings

Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER
Phase of Operation: MANEUVERING

Findings

1. (C) WEATHER CONDITION - DOWNDRAFT
2. (C) WEATHER EVALUATION - INADEQUATE - PILOT IN COMMAND
3. (C) PLANNING/DECISION - IMPROPER - PILOT IN COMMAND

Factual Information

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	Male
Airplane Rating(s):	None	Seat Occupied:	Unknown
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	Glider	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	None	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Unknown Unknown	Last FAA Medical Exam:	
Occupational Pilot:	UNK	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:			

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	SCHWEIZER	Registration:	N2451W
Model/Series:	SGS 2-33 SGS 2-33	Aircraft Category:	Glider
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	
Landing Gear Type:		Seats:	2
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	January 2, 2000 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	0 Unknown
Airframe Total Time:		Engine Manufacturer:	
ELT:	Not installed	Engine Model/Series:	
Registered Owner:	RIDGE & VALLEY SOARING CLUB	Rated Power:	
Operator:	RIDGE & VALLEY SOARING CLUB	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None
Operator Does Business As:		Operator Designator Code:	

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	ROA ,1176 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	999 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	14:50 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Unknown	Visibility	35 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	Broken / 8500 ft AGL	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	24 knots / 33 knots	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	290°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	29 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	20°C / 1°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:		Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:		Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	14:45 Local	Type of Airspace:	

Airport Information

Airport:	SPRINGWOOD GLIDERPORT	Runway Surface Type:	
Airport Elevation:		Runway Surface Condition:	
Runway Used:	0	IFR Approach:	
Runway Length/Width:		VFR Approach/Landing:	Precautionary landing

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Serious	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	1 Minor	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 Serious, 1 Minor	Latitude, Longitude:	37.520202,-79.67955(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Jones, Dennis
Additional Participating Persons:	JOHN PHELPS; RICHMOND , VA
Original Publish Date:	July 13, 1993
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=11664

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The NTSB does not assign fault or blame for an accident or incident; rather, as specified by NTSB regulation, “accident/incident investigations are fact-finding proceedings with no formal issues and no adverse parties ... and are not conducted for the purpose of determining the rights or liabilities of any person” (Title 49 *Code of Federal Regulations* section 831.4). Assignment of fault or legal liability is not relevant to the NTSB’s statutory mission to improve transportation safety by investigating accidents and incidents and issuing safety recommendations. In addition, statutory language prohibits the admission into evidence or use of any part of an NTSB report related to an accident in a civil action for damages resulting from a matter mentioned in the report (Title 49 *United States Code* section 1154(b)). A factual report that may be admissible under 49 *United States Code* section 1154(b) is available [here](#).