



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	GENEVA, Illinois	Accident Number:	CHI84LA260
Date & Time:	June 23, 1984, 20:00 Local	Registration:	N1537D
Aircraft:	BALLOON WORKS FIREFLY 7	Aircraft Damage:	Minor
Defining Event:		Injuries:	2 Serious
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

THE BALLOON DESCENDED IN AN AREA OF THUNDERSTORMS AND TURBULENCE AND COLLIDED WITH TREES. THE PLT SAID THE BALLOON 'CAVED IN' AND DESCENDED RAPIDLY. THE PLTS HUSBAND AND A PASSENGER REVEALED THAT THE BALLOON WAS 'VENTED' BY THE PLT TO LAND BEFORE REACHING A POWER STATION AFTER BEING 'SUCKED' UP TOWARD A CLOUD. TWO OF THE 16 BALLOONIST ABORTED THE FLT BECAUSE OF THE WEATHER. THE ACCIDENT PLT SAW CLOUD BUILDUPS BEFORE DEPARTURE BUT WAS INFORMED THEY WERE DISSAPATING.

Probable Cause and Findings

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

Findings

Occurrence #1: ALTITUDE DEVIATION, UNCONTROLLED
Phase of Operation: DESCENT - UNCONTROLLED

Findings

1. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - TURBULENCE
2. (C) PREFLIGHT PLANNING/PREPARATION - INADEQUATE - PILOT IN COMMAND
3. (F) MOTIVATION - PILOT IN COMMAND
4. (C) WEATHER EVALUATION - INACCURATE - PILOT IN COMMAND

Occurrence #2: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER
Phase of Operation: DESCENT - UNCONTROLLED

Findings

5. TERRAIN CONDITION - HIGH VEGETATION

Factual Information

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	43,Female
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land	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:	No	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	135 hours (Total, all aircraft), 50 hours (Total, this make and model)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	BALLOON WORKS	Registration:	N1537D
Model/Series:	FIREFLY 7 FIREFLY 7	Aircraft Category:	Balloon
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:		Serial Number:	10182
Landing Gear Type:		Seats:	
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	May 18, 1984 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	900 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	6 Hrs	Engines:	0 Unknown
Airframe Total Time:	170 Hrs	Engine Manufacturer:	NONE
ELT:	Not installed	Engine Model/Series:	
Registered Owner:	BARBARA G. HACKLEMAN	Rated Power:	
Operator:		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:	DPA ,650 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	5 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	20:08 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	45°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Visibility	7 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	Broken / 2500 ft AGL	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	15 knots / 25 knots	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	350°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	29 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	GENEVA , IL	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:		Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	19:15 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Airport Information

Airport:		Runway Surface Type:	Dirt
Airport Elevation:	0 ft msl	Runway Surface Condition:	
Runway Used:	0	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:	0 ft / 0 ft	VFR Approach/Landing:	Forced landing;Straight-in

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Serious	Aircraft Damage:	Minor
Passenger Injuries:	1 Serious	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	2 Serious	Latitude, Longitude:	41.879173,-88.309707(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC): Rathke jr., Fred

Additional Participating Persons:

Original Publish Date:

Last Revision Date:

Investigation Class: [Class](#)

Note:

Investigation Docket: <https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=12668>

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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](#).