



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	AMARILLO, Texas	Accident Number:	FTW84LA254
Date & Time:	May 27, 1984, 08:40 Local	Registration:	N3610R
Aircraft:	BALLOON WORKS FIREFLY 7	Aircraft Damage:	None
Defining Event:		Injuries:	1 Serious, 1 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

DURING A PRE-FLT BRIEFING, THE WIND WAS REPORTED TO BE FROM 280 DEG AT 6 TO 12 KTS. AT LAUNCH TIME, THE PLT ESTIMATED THE WIND WAS BLOWING AT 7 KTS. HE TOOK OFF AT 0720 CDT WITHOUT DIFFICULTY & CLIMBED TO ABOUT 1000 FT AGL. APRX 1 HR AFTER TAKING OFF, THE PLT TRIED TO LAND, BUT REPORTED AN ENCOUNTER WITH TURBULENCE & WIND SHEAR INDICATING THE WIND HAD INCREASED. HE DECIDED TO FLY TO WHERE THE TERRAIN WAS 'BROKEN' & HE COULD 'EXPECT A BETTER WINDBREAK.' AT ABOUT 10 FT AGL, HE 'RIPPED OUT.' THE BALLOON CONTACTED THE GROUND & DRAGGED APRX 100 YDS, CAME TO A BRIEF STOP, & BLEW ANOTHER 10 TO 15 FT. AT THAT POINT, ONE PASSENGER FELL OUT OF THE BASKET. THE BASKET WAS BLOWN OVER HER & BROKE HER ARM. ACCORDING TO THE PLT, HE HAD PROPERLY BRIEFED THE PASSENGERS ON THE APPROPRIATE PROCEDURES FOR THE PREVAILING WIND.

Probable Cause and Findings

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

Findings

Occurrence #1: MISCELLANEOUS/OTHER
Phase of Operation: LANDING

Findings

1. (C) PLANNING/DECISION - IMPROPER - PILOT IN COMMAND
2. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - UNFAVORABLE WIND
3. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - WINDSHEAR
4. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - TURBULENCE
5. (F) TERRAIN CONDITION - ROUGH/UNEVEN
6. (C) PROCEDURES/DIRECTIVES - NOT FOLLOWED - PASSENGER

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:	Unknown Unknown	Last FAA Medical Exam:	
Occupational Pilot:	UNK	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	108 hours (Total, all aircraft), 108 hours (Total, this make and model), 108 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 5 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 1 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	BALLOON WORKS	Registration:	N3610R
Model/Series:	FIREFLY 7 FIREFLY 7	Aircraft Category:	Balloon
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	F7-031
Landing Gear Type:	Skid	Seats:	
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	May 3, 1984 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	1660 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	1 Hrs	Engines:	Unknown
Airframe Total Time:	27 Hrs	Engine Manufacturer:	NONE
ELT:	Not installed	Engine Model/Series:	NONE
Registered Owner:	DONALD J. ELWELL	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:		Distance from Accident Site:	
Observation Time:	08:40 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Visibility	5 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	25 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	225°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:		Temperature/Dew Point:	23°C / -18°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	AMARILLO , TX	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:		Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	07:20 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Airport Information

Airport:		Runway Surface Type:	Dirt
Airport Elevation:		Runway Surface Condition:	Rough;Vegetation
Runway Used:	0	IFR Approach:	
Runway Length/Width:		VFR Approach/Landing:	Straight-in

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Damage:	None
Passenger Injuries:	1 Serious	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 Serious, 1 None	Latitude, Longitude:	35.170921,-101.930343(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC): Mcfall, T

Additional Participating Persons:

Original Publish Date:

Last Revision Date:

Investigation Class: [Class](#)

Note:

Investigation Docket: <https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=21352>

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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](#).