



# Aviation Investigation Final Report

---

<b>Location:</b>	BISHOP, California	<b>Accident Number:</b>	LAX92LA346
<b>Date &amp; Time:</b>	August 12, 1992, 13:30 Local	<b>Registration:</b>	N7988
<b>Aircraft:</b>	SCHEMPP-HIRTH CIRRUS	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Destroyed
<b>Defining Event:</b>		<b>Injuries:</b>	1 Fatal
<b>Flight Conducted Under:</b>	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

---

## Analysis

THE CERTIFICATED GLIDER PILOT, THE SOLE OCCUPANT, DEPARTED FOR A LOCAL AREA FLIGHT WITH LIFT CONDITIONS DESCRIBED AS WEAK TO MODERATE. THE WRECKAGE WAS LOCATED ABOUT 2 HOURS AFTER DEPARTURE IN AN AREA OF RUGGED MOUNTAINOUS TERRAIN. THE LEFT WING OF THE GLIDER STRUCK A ROCKY RIDGE AND CAME TO REST ABOUT 300 FEET BELOW THE RIDGE LINE. OTHER GLIDER PILOTS REPORTED THAT THE ACCIDENT PILOT HAD A PROCLIVITY TO FLY OVER MOUNTAINOUS AREAS AT LOW ALTITUDES. A TOXICOLOGICAL EXAMINATION DISCLOSED THE PRESENCE OF A CARDIAC ANTIARRHYTHMIC DRUG. THE QUANTITY OF DRUG FOUND IS CONSIDERED TO BE AT THERAPEUTIC LEVELS. ACCORDING TO A CAMI PHYSICIAN, THE DRUG, IN VIEW OF THE PILOT'S PREVIOUS MEDICAL HISTORY, DID NOT BY ITSELF, PRESENT A DISQUALIFYING CONDITION THAT WOULD HAVE BEEN EXPECTED TO ADVERSELY AFFECT THE PILOT'S ABILITY TO PILOT A GLIDER.

## Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: THE PILOT'S POOR INFLIGHT DECISION TO FLY OVER MOUNTAINOUS TERRAIN AT AN INADEQUATE ALTITUDE.

## Findings

---

Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER

Phase of Operation: MANEUVERING

### Findings

1. TERRAIN CONDITION - MOUNTAINOUS/HILLY
2. (C) IN-FLIGHT PLANNING/DECISION - POOR - PILOT IN COMMAND
3. (C) ALTITUDE - INADEQUATE - PILOT IN COMMAND

## Factual Information

### Pilot Information

<b>Certificate:</b>	Private	<b>Age:</b>	71, Male
<b>Airplane Rating(s):</b>	Single-engine land	<b>Seat Occupied:</b>	Center
<b>Other Aircraft Rating(s):</b>	Glider	<b>Restraint Used:</b>	
<b>Instrument Rating(s):</b>	Airplane	<b>Second Pilot Present:</b>	No
<b>Instructor Rating(s):</b>	None	<b>Toxicology Performed:</b>	Yes
<b>Medical Certification:</b>	None None	<b>Last FAA Medical Exam:</b>	
<b>Occupational Pilot:</b>	No	<b>Last Flight Review or Equivalent:</b>	
<b>Flight Time:</b>	4971 hours (Total, all aircraft), 66 hours (Total, this make and model), 57 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 39 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft)		

### Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

<b>Aircraft Make:</b>	SCHEMPP-HIRTH	<b>Registration:</b>	N7988
<b>Model/Series:</b>	CIRRUS CIRRUS	<b>Aircraft Category:</b>	Glider
<b>Year of Manufacture:</b>		<b>Amateur Built:</b>	
<b>Airworthiness Certificate:</b>	Normal	<b>Serial Number:</b>	101
<b>Landing Gear Type:</b>	Retractable - Tailwheel	<b>Seats:</b>	1
<b>Date/Type of Last Inspection:</b>	January 3, 1992 Annual	<b>Certified Max Gross Wt.:</b>	1014 lbs
<b>Time Since Last Inspection:</b>	49 Hrs	<b>Engines:</b>	0 Unknown
<b>Airframe Total Time:</b>	294 Hrs	<b>Engine Manufacturer:</b>	
<b>ELT:</b>	Not installed	<b>Engine Model/Series:</b>	
<b>Registered Owner:</b>	SHELDON, DAVID B.	<b>Rated Power:</b>	
<b>Operator:</b>	SHELDON, DAVID B.	<b>Operating Certificate(s) Held:</b>	None
<b>Operator Does Business As:</b>		<b>Operator Designator Code:</b>	

## Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

<b>Conditions at Accident Site:</b>	Visual (VMC)	<b>Condition of Light:</b>	Day
<b>Observation Facility, Elevation:</b>	BIH ,4120 ft msl	<b>Distance from Accident Site:</b>	8 Nautical Miles
<b>Observation Time:</b>	12:50 Local	<b>Direction from Accident Site:</b>	240°
<b>Lowest Cloud Condition:</b>	Scattered / 12000 ft AGL	<b>Visibility</b>	50 miles
<b>Lowest Ceiling:</b>	None	<b>Visibility (RVR):</b>	
<b>Wind Speed/Gusts:</b>	10 knots /	<b>Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:</b>	/
<b>Wind Direction:</b>	160°	<b>Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:</b>	/
<b>Altimeter Setting:</b>	30 inches Hg	<b>Temperature/Dew Point:</b>	38°C / 10°C
<b>Precipitation and Obscuration:</b>	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
<b>Departure Point:</b>	BISHOP , CA (BIH )	<b>Type of Flight Plan Filed:</b>	None
<b>Destination:</b>		<b>Type of Clearance:</b>	None
<b>Departure Time:</b>	11:30 Local	<b>Type of Airspace:</b>	Class G

## Airport Information

<b>Airport:</b>		<b>Runway Surface Type:</b>	
<b>Airport Elevation:</b>		<b>Runway Surface Condition:</b>	
<b>Runway Used:</b>	0	<b>IFR Approach:</b>	None
<b>Runway Length/Width:</b>		<b>VFR Approach/Landing:</b>	None

## Wreckage and Impact Information

<b>Crew Injuries:</b>	1 Fatal	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Destroyed
<b>Passenger Injuries:</b>		<b>Aircraft Fire:</b>	None
<b>Ground Injuries:</b>	N/A	<b>Aircraft Explosion:</b>	None
<b>Total Injuries:</b>	1 Fatal	<b>Latitude, Longitude:</b>	37.500366,-118.309104(est)

## Administrative Information

<b>Investigator In Charge (IIC):</b>	Erickson, Scott
<b>Additional Participating Persons:</b>	FLOYD GOODYEAR; LAS VEGAS , NV
<b>Original Publish Date:</b>	June 30, 1993
<b>Last Revision Date:</b>	
<b>Investigation Class:</b>	<a href="#">Class</a>
<b>Note:</b>	
<b>Investigation Docket:</b>	<a href="https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=27729">https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=27729</a>

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) is an independent federal agency charged by Congress with investigating every civil aviation accident in the United States and significant events in other modes of transportation—railroad, transit, highway, marine, pipeline, and commercial space. We determine the probable causes of the accidents and events we investigate, and issue safety recommendations aimed at preventing future occurrences. In addition, we conduct transportation safety research studies and offer information and other assistance to family members and survivors for each accident or event we investigate. We also serve as the appellate authority for enforcement actions involving aviation and mariner certificates issued by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and US Coast Guard, and we adjudicate appeals of civil penalty actions taken by the FAA.

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](#).