



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	ELMIRA, New York	Accident Number:	IAD96LA142
Date & Time:	September 1, 1996, 10:00 Local	Registration:	N1142S
Aircraft:	Schweizer SGS-1-26E	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	1 Serious
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Instructional		

Analysis

The pilot reported that she had made two successful landings in the glider, and was on the third solo flight. According to the pilot, she was planning to land on runway 16, but decided at the last minute to change runways. She stated that the altitude and airspeed was inadequate to complete the landing on the new runway. She reported that she skidded the glider with the rudder to avoid banking too steeply and the combination initiated a stall and spin to the left. According to an FAA inspector, this was the pilot's third flight in this glider. The pilot reported that there was no mechanical malfunction, and the accident could have been prevented if she maintained a proper pattern airspeed, not change runways at the last minute, and not use a forward slip too low on final approach with the spoilers closed.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: the pilot's failure to maintain adequate altitude and airspeed during the landing approach, resulting in a stall/spin and subsequent encounter with an embankment.

Findings

Occurrence #1: LOSS OF CONTROL - IN FLIGHT
Phase of Operation: APPROACH

Findings

1. (C) ALTITUDE - MISJUDGED - PILOT IN COMMAND

2. (C) AIRSPEED - INADEQUATE - PILOT IN COMMAND
3. (C) STALL/SPIN - INADVERTENT - PILOT IN COMMAND

Occurrence #2: ON GROUND/WATER ENCOUNTER WITH TERRAIN/WATER
Phase of Operation: LANDING

Findings

4. TERRAIN CONDITION - DROP-OFF/DESCENDING EMBANKMENT

Factual Information

On September 1, 1996, at about 1409 eastern daylight time (EDT), N1142S, a Schweizer SGS-1-26E glider, overshot runway 17 during landing at Harris Hill Airport, in Elmira, New York. The student pilot, the sole occupant, was seriously injured. The airplane sustained substantial damage. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed and a flight plan was not filed. The local, instructional flight was conducted under 14 CFR Part 91, and originated from Elmira, New York, at 1320 EDT.

The pilot reported that she completed two successful landings and this was her third solo flight. She said, "...started my landing approach to runway 16 at Harris Hill with the idea of using a slip to lose altitude, if possible. On final I initiated a slip with the spoilers closed so I would not be too low. I then realized I was too low for a slip, but in terminating I ballooned and became concerned with completing successful landing on 16 due to being too high. I then decided to extend my glide path and turn East to land on Harris Hill's auxiliary runway located at the South end of the field. However, my altitude and airspeed were both too low to complete this maneuver...I skidded the glider with the rudder to avoid banking too steeply and this in combination with my low airspeed initiated a stall and spin to the left... ."

According to a Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Safety Inspector, this was the pilot's third flight in this glider. The glider overshot the runway and slid down an embankment. The pilot stated that "there was no mechanical malfunction and the accident could have been prevented if she had maintained the proper pattern airspeed, flying coordinated at low airspeeds close to the ground, not changing runways at the last minute, and not using a forward slip too low on final with spoilers closed".

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	59,Female
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Front
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	Glider	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	None	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 3 Valid Medical--no waivers/lim.	Last FAA Medical Exam:	March 21, 1996
Occupational Pilot:	UNK	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	137 hours (Total, all aircraft), 2 hours (Total, this make and model), 6 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 20 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 16 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 2 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Schweizer	Registration:	N1142S
Model/Series:	SGS-1-26E SGS-1-26E	Aircraft Category:	Glider
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	522
Landing Gear Type:	Tailwheel; Skid	Seats:	1
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	November 17, 1995 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	700 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	38 Hrs	Engines:	Unknown
Airframe Total Time:	351 Hrs	Engine Manufacturer:	
ELT:		Engine Model/Series:	
Registered Owner:	DORIANNE E RIGGS	Rated Power:	
Operator:	HARRIS HILL SOARING CORP.,	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:		Direction from Accident Site:	
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Scattered / 4300 ft AGL	Visibility	6 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	5 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	360°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	27°C / 13°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	, NY (4NY8)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:		Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	13:20 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Airport Information

Airport:	HARRIS HILL 4NY8	Runway Surface Type:	Asphalt
Airport Elevation:	1700 ft msl	Runway Surface Condition:	Dry
Runway Used:	16	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:	1700 ft / 200 ft	VFR Approach/Landing:	Full stop

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Serious	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:		Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 Serious	Latitude, Longitude:	

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Drake-nurse, Beverley
Additional Participating Persons:	DARLENE SOMERS; ROCHESTER , NY
Original Publish Date:	March 31, 1998
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=28104

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