



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	TEHACHAPI, California	Accident Number:	LAX95LA050
Date & Time:	December 11, 1994, 14:00 Local	Registration:	N3950A
Aircraft:	Burkhart Grob G-103	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	2 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Instructional		

Analysis

THE PILOT SAID IN A POSTACCIDENT TELEPHONE INTERVIEW THAT HE WAS RIDGE SOARING ABOUT 100 FEET ABOVE THE TREES ALONG A SOUTHEAST/NORTHWESTERLY COURSE. THE PILOT SUCCESSFULLY EXECUTED ONE PASS OVER THE RIDGE LINE. ON THE SECOND PASS, THE FLIGHT ENCOUNTERED A SEVERE DOWNDRAFT. THE GLIDER'S AIRSPEED WAS INSUFFICIENT TO CLIMB OUT OF THE IMPENDING TREE LINE AND THE GLIDER'S RIGHT WING STRUCK A TREE. THE PILOT REGAINED CONTROL OF THE GLIDER AND LANDED AT THE AIRPORT WITHOUT FURTHER INCIDENT.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: the pilot's poor in-flight planning/decision and inadequate airspeed. The downdraft and trees were factors in this accident.

Findings

Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT ENCOUNTER WITH WEATHER
Phase of Operation: MANEUVERING

Findings

1. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - DOWNDRAFT
2. (C) IN-FLIGHT PLANNING/DECISION - POOR - PILOT IN COMMAND(CFI)

Occurrence #2: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH OBJECT
Phase of Operation: MANEUVERING

Findings

3. (F) OBJECT - TREE(S)
4. (C) AIRSPEED - INADEQUATE - PILOT IN COMMAND(CFI)

Factual Information

On December 11, 1994, at 1400 hours Pacific standard time, a Grob G-103 glider, N3950A, collided with some trees near Tehachapi, California. The pilot was conducting a local visual flight rules instructional flight. The glider, operated by Skylark North, Tehachapi, California, sustained substantial damage. Neither the certificated commercial pilot/certified flight instructor (CFI) nor the certificated private/student glider pilot was injured. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed. The flight originated at Mountain Valley Airport, Tehachapi, California, at 1330 hours.

The CFI reported this accident to the National Transportation Safety Board on December 12, 1994. He said the flight encountered a severe downdraft while maneuvering over a ridge on a southeast/northwest course about 100 feet above the ground. The glider's right wing struck some trees. The CFI landed the glider at Mountain Valley Airport without further incident. Examination of the glider revealed that the right wing sustained structural damage.

The CFI submitted the required Pilot/Operator Aircraft Accident Report, NTSB Form 6120.1/2. He repeated his telephone statement in the report. He said that the accident occurred on the second pass over the ridge line. The first pass was uneventful.

When the glider encountered the downdraft, the airspeed was inadequate to climb successfully over the impending tree line. The CFI also said that the glider did not experience any mechanical malfunctions or failures.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial; Flight instructor	Age:	36, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Rear
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	Glider	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	None	Second Pilot Present:	Yes
Instructor Rating(s):	Glider	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 2 Valid Medical--w/ waivers/lim	Last FAA Medical Exam:	December 19, 1994
Occupational Pilot:	UNK	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	6037 hours (Total, all aircraft), 520 hours (Total, this make and model), 5980 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 130 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 40 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 2 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Burkhart Grob	Registration:	N3950A
Model/Series:	G-103 G-103	Aircraft Category:	Glider
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	3793
Landing Gear Type:	Ski/wheel	Seats:	2
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	March 29, 1994 100 hour	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	1279 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	50 Hrs	Engines:	Unknown
Airframe Total Time:	4097 Hrs	Engine Manufacturer:	
ELT:	Not installed	Engine Model/Series:	
Registered Owner:	JAY DEMIRANDA	Rated Power:	
Operator:	SKYLARK NORTH	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 / 15000 ft AGL	Visibility	100 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	13 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	280°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:		Temperature/Dew Point:	10°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:		Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:		Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	13:30 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Airport Information

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

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	2 None	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:		Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	2 None	Latitude, Longitude:	35.120933,-118.5102(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Llorente, A.
Additional Participating Persons:	JAMES FORD; VAN NUYS , CA
Original Publish Date:	April 5, 1995
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=28992

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