



# Aviation Investigation Final Report

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|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|------------|
| <b>Location:</b>               | JEAN, Nevada                         | <b>Accident Number:</b> | LAX95LA123 |
| <b>Date &amp; Time:</b>        | February 26, 1995, 16:12 Local       | <b>Registration:</b>    | N57GE      |
| <b>Aircraft:</b>               | BURKHART GROB G102<br>ASTIR CS       | <b>Aircraft Damage:</b> | Destroyed  |
| <b>Defining Event:</b>         |                                      | <b>Injuries:</b>        | 1 Minor    |
| <b>Flight Conducted Under:</b> | Part 91: General aviation - Personal |                         |            |

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## Analysis

THUNDERSTORMS AND LIGHTNING WERE OBSERVED WEST OF THE AIRPORT. GROUND WITNESSES REPORTED THAT THE GLIDER ACHIEVED ABOUT 300 FEET AGL DURING THE TAKEOFF ON RUNWAY 20 BY AUTO TOW. INSTEAD OF COMPLETING A NORMAL PITCH UP TO INCREASE ALTITUDE, THE PILOT RELEASED THE TOW LINE, FLEW TO THE DEPARTURE END OF THE RUNWAY IN A DESCENT, AND WAS PERFORMING A 270-DEGREE LEFT TURN TO LAND ON A SHORT CROSSWIND RUNWAY WHEN THE LEFT WING TIP DRUG THE GROUND. THE GLIDER THEN CARTWHEELED. THE PILOT SAID HE WAS AWARE OF THE THUNDERSTORM ACTIVITY TO THE WEST OF THE RUNWAY, BUT ELECTED TO DO A SHORT FLIGHT. HE SAID THE TAKEOFF WAS NORMAL UNTIL THE GLIDER ACHIEVED 300 FEET AGL WHEN HE ENCOUNTERED A SUDDEN DOWNWIND CONDITION. DURING THE ATTEMPT TO RETURN TO THE AIRPORT, HE WAS UNABLE TO MAINTAIN AIRSPEED AND ALTITUDE DURING THE TURN AND THE LEFT WING TIP INADVERTENTLY CONTACTED THE GROUND.

## Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: the pilot's decision to fly in known adverse weather conditions which resulted in a wind shear encounter at low altitude during the takeoff initial climb.

## Findings

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Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT ENCOUNTER WITH WEATHER

Phase of Operation: TAKEOFF - INITIAL CLIMB

Findings

1. WEATHER CONDITION - THUNDERSTORM
2. (C) FLIGHT INTO KNOWN ADVERSE WEATHER - ATTEMPTED - PILOT IN COMMAND

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Occurrence #2: DRAGGED WING, ROTOR, POD, FLOAT OR TAIL/SKID

Phase of Operation: MANEUVERING - TURN TO LANDING AREA (EMERGENCY)

Findings

3. WEATHER CONDITION - WINDSHEAR
4. (C) AIRSPEED - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND
5. (C) STALL/MUSH - INADVERTENT - PILOT IN COMMAND

## Factual Information

On February 26, 1995, at 1612 Pacific standard time, a Burkhart Grob G102 Astir CS glider, N57GE, drug a wing and collided with the ground while attempting a rejected takeoff maneuver at the Jean, Nevada, airport. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed with witness reports of lightening and cumulonimbus cloud activity nearby. The glider was destroyed in the ground collision sequence. The certificated commercial pilot, the sole occupant, sustained minor injuries. The flight was originating at the time of the accident as a local area personal operation.

Ground witnesses reported that the glider achieved about 300 feet above ground level (agl) during the takeoff on runway 20 by auto tow. Instead of completing a normal pitch up to increase altitude, the pilot released the tow line, flew to the departure end of the runway in a descent, and was performing a 270-degree left turn to land on a short crosswind runway when the left wing tip drug the ground. The glider then cartwheeled.

The pilot was interviewed March 1, 1995, by Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) inspectors from the Las Vegas, Nevada, Flight Standards District Office. The pilot stated that he was aware of the thunderstorm activity to the west of the runway. The takeoff was normal until the glider achieved 300 feet agl when the pilot encountered a sudden downwind condition. The pilot decided that the glider was incapable of gaining altitude with the wind conditions and elected to land on a short crosswind runway. He was attempting a 270-degree turn to that runway, but was unable to maintain airspeed and altitude during the turn and the left wing tip inadvertently contacted the ground.

The 1550 official Las Vegas aviation surface weather observation was reporting in part: ". . . Cumulonimbus clouds southwest through west moving northeast. Occasional cloud to cloud and cloud to ground lightening southwest. Moderate cumulus clouds over mountains all quadrants." The accident site is 23 miles south of the weather observation station.

## Pilot Information

|                                  |   |  |              |
|----------------------------------|---|--|--------------|
| <b>Certificate:</b>              | Commercial                              | <b>Age:</b>                              | 74, 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>     | None                                    | <b>Second Pilot Present:</b>             | No           |
| <b>Instructor Rating(s):</b>     | Glider                                  | <b>Toxicology Performed:</b>             | No           |
| <b>Medical Certification:</b>    | Class 3 Valid Medical-w/<br>waivers/lim | <b>Last FAA Medical Exam:</b>            | July 1, 1993 |
| <b>Occupational Pilot:</b>       | No                                      | <b>Last Flight Review or Equivalent:</b> |              |
| <b>Flight Time:</b>              | 1600 hours (Total, all aircraft)        |  |              |

## Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

|                                      |                          |                                       |         |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------|
| <b>Aircraft Make:</b>                | BURKHART GROB            | <b>Registration:</b>                  | N57GE   |
| <b>Model/Series:</b>                 | G102 ASTIR CS G102 ASTIR | <b>Aircraft Category:</b>             | Glider  |
| <b>Year of Manufacture:</b>          |                          | <b>Amateur Built:</b>                 |         |
| <b>Airworthiness Certificate:</b>    | Normal                   | <b>Serial Number:</b>                 | 1229    |
| <b>Landing Gear Type:</b>            | Tailwheel                | <b>Seats:</b>                         | 1       |
| <b>Date/Type of Last Inspection:</b> | Unknown                  | <b>Certified Max Gross Wt.:</b>       | 700 lbs |
| <b>Time Since Last Inspection:</b>   |                          | <b>Engines:</b>                       | Unknown |
| <b>Airframe Total Time:</b>          |                          | <b>Engine Manufacturer:</b>           |         |
| <b>ELT:</b>                          | Not installed            | <b>Engine Model/Series:</b>           |         |
| <b>Registered Owner:</b>             | MICHAEL W. PAYNE         | <b>Rated Power:</b>                   |         |
| <b>Operator:</b>                     | RALPH D. BIESEMEYER      | <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> | LAS ,2175 ft msl                 | <b>Distance from Accident Site:</b>         | 23 Nautical Miles |
| <b>Observation Time:</b>                | 15:50 Local                      | <b>Direction from Accident Site:</b>        | 8°                |
| <b>Lowest Cloud Condition:</b>          | Scattered / 10000 ft AGL         | <b>Visibility</b>                           | 50 miles          |
| <b>Lowest Ceiling:</b>                  | Overcast / 25000 ft AGL          | <b>Visibility (RVR):</b>                    |                   |
| <b>Wind Speed/Gusts:</b>                | 4 knots /                        | <b>Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:</b>     | /                 |
| <b>Wind Direction:</b>                  | 360°                             | <b>Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:</b> | /                 |
| <b>Altimeter Setting:</b>               | 29 inches Hg                     | <b>Temperature/Dew Point:</b>               | 21°C / 8°C        |
| <b>Precipitation and Obscuration:</b>   | No Obscuration; No Precipitation |   |                   |
| <b>Departure Point:</b>                 | (0L7)                            | <b>Type of Flight Plan Filed:</b>           | None              |
| <b>Destination:</b>                     |                                  | <b>Type of Clearance:</b>                   | None              |
| <b>Departure Time:</b>                  | 16:11 Local                      | <b>Type of Airspace:</b>                    | Class E           |

## Airport Information

|                             |                  |                                  |                |
|-----------------------------|------------------|----------------------------------|----------------|
| <b>Airport:</b>             | JEAN 0L7         | <b>Runway Surface Type:</b>      | Gravel         |
| <b>Airport Elevation:</b>   | 2833 ft msl      | <b>Runway Surface Condition:</b> | Dry            |
| <b>Runway Used:</b>         | 20               | <b>IFR Approach:</b>             | None           |
| <b>Runway Length/Width:</b> | 4545 ft / 100 ft | <b>VFR Approach/Landing:</b>     | Forced landing |

## Wreckage and Impact Information

|                            |         |                             |                            |
|----------------------------|---------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>Crew Injuries:</b>      | 1 Minor | <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 Minor | <b>Latitude, Longitude:</b> | 35.749744,-115.529441(est) |

## Administrative Information

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|--|---|
| <b>Investigator In Charge (IIC):</b>     | Rich, Jeff  |
| <b>Additional Participating Persons:</b> | RALPH R PERRY; LAS VEGAS , NV   |
| <b>Original Publish Date:</b>            | August 31, 1995   |
| <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=29046">https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=29046</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](#).