



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	PEORIA, Arizona	Accident Number:	LAX95LA285
Date & Time:	August 10, 1995, 14:00 Local	Registration:	N462E
Aircraft:	Schempp-Hirth CIRRUS-B	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	1 Minor
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

AFTER TAKEOFF AND REACHING 3,000 FEET, THE PILOT EXPERIENCED A LOSS OF THERMAL LIFT AND DECIDED TO MAKE A LANDING TO A 1,500-FOOT EMERGENCY AIRSTRIP. HE ELECTED TO LAND UPHILL TO THE NORTH WITH A 10 KNOT TAIL WIND, GUSTING TO 20 KNOTS. WHILE ON SHORT FINAL, HE ENCOUNTERED A THERMAL LIFT AND REALIZED HE WOULD LAND TOO LONG AND HE EXECUTED AN 'S' MANEUVER TO LOSE ALTITUDE. DURING THE TURN, THE RIGHT WING COLLIDED WITH GROUND. HE REPORTED NO MECHANICAL PROBLEMS WITH THE GLIDER.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: the pilot's improper inflight decision to attempt a tail wind landing to a short runway.

Findings

Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER
Phase of Operation: MANEUVERING - TURN TO LANDING AREA (EMERGENCY)

Findings

1. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - TAILWIND
2. (C) PLANNED APPROACH - IMPROPER - PILOT IN COMMAND
3. (F) TERRAIN CONDITION - SHORT RUNWAY/LANDING AREA
4. (C) COMPENSATION FOR WIND CONDITIONS - IMPROPER - PILOT IN COMMAND



Factual Information

On August 10, 1995, at 1400 hours mountain standard time, the pilot of a Schempp-Hirth Cirrus-B glider, N462E, attempted an off-airport landing to an emergency airstrip after experiencing a loss of thermal lift while flying near Peoria, Arizona. Visual meteorological conditions existed at the time. The aircraft received substantial damage during the forced landing and the pilot received minor injuries. The aircraft departed from the Pleasant Valley Airport at 1315 hours.

The pilot reported in his report that after takeoff he encountered poor lift conditions at 3,000 feet mean sea level and decided to land at a small 1,500-foot emergency airstrip. The airstrip is on a north-south orientation with an uphill slope to the north. The pilot elected to land to the north with a tailwind of 10 knots.

The pilot indicated that when he was about 200 feet above the ground on final approach he encountered a thermal lift and was unable to lose altitude despite using full spoilers. At this time, the pilot initiated an "S" turn to the left to lose altitude. During the turning maneuver, the pilot lost lift and the right wing collided with the ground. The pilot reported no mechanical problems with the glider. Afterwards, he determined that the winds were gusting up to 20 knots.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	51, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	None	Seat Occupied:	Front
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	None	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	Glider	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	None None	Last FAA Medical Exam:	
Occupational Pilot:	UNK	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	192 hours (Total, all aircraft), 62 hours (Total, this make and model), 184 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 40 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 26 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 7 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Schempp-Hirth	Registration:	N462E
Model/Series:	CIRRUS-B CIRRUS-B	Aircraft Category:	Glider
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	216
Landing Gear Type:	Retractable - Tailwheel	Seats:	1
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	March 2, 1995 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	860 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	79 Hrs	Engines:	Unknown
Airframe Total Time:	1549 Hrs	Engine Manufacturer:	
ELT:		Engine Model/Series:	
Registered Owner:	HANS HEYDRICH	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:		Direction from Accident Site:	
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Visibility	50 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	10 knots / 20 knots	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	180°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	29 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	43°C / 13°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	(AZ05)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:		Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	13:15 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Airport Information

Airport:		Runway Surface Type:	Dirt
Airport Elevation:	1800 ft msl	Runway Surface Condition:	
Runway Used:	36	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:	1500 ft / 70 ft	VFR Approach/Landing:	

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Minor	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:		Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 Minor	Latitude, Longitude:	33.649066,-112.239151(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Mucho, R.
Additional Participating Persons:	BILL PRATT; SCOTTSDALE , AZ
Original Publish Date:	November 30, 1995
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=29178

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](#).