



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	ELBERTA, Alabama	Accident Number:	ATL93LA097
Date & Time:	May 29, 1993, 16:15 Local	Registration:	N640RM
Aircraft:	LET L-13	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	2 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

ACCORDING TO THE PILOT, ABOUT FIFTEEN MINUTES INTO THE FLIGHT, HE DECIDED TO RETURN TO THE DEPARTURE POINT. UPON TURNING EASTWARD, HE ENCOUNTERED A CLOUD LAYER AT 4000 FEET. WHILE MANEUVERING AROUND THE CLOUDS, THE FLIGHT ENCOUNTERED A DOWNDRAFT, AT WHICH TIME, THE GLIDER DEVELOPED A 4000 FOOT PER MINUTE RATE OF DESCENT. THE PILOT MANAGED TO ARREST THE SINK RATE BUT THE GLIDER'S LEFT WINGTIP COLLIDED WITH THE GROUND AS THE PILOT WAS ATTEMPTING A PRECAUTIONARY LANDING. NO MECHANICAL PROBLEMS WERE REPORTED WITH THE GLIDER. THE PILOT DID NOT RECEIVE A WEATHER BRIEFING PRIOR TO THE FLIGHT

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be:
THE PILOT'S INADEQUATE PREFLIGHT PLANNING

Findings

Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT ENCOUNTER WITH WEATHER
Phase of Operation: CRUISE - NORMAL

Findings

1. WEATHER CONDITION - DOWNDRAFT
2. (C) PREFLIGHT PLANNING/PREPARATION - INADEQUATE - PILOT IN COMMAND

Occurrence #2: LOSS OF CONTROL - IN FLIGHT
Phase of Operation: CRUISE - NORMAL

Occurrence #3: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER
Phase of Operation: DESCENT - UNCONTROLLED

Findings

3. TERRAIN CONDITION - GROUND

Factual Information

On May 29, 1993 at 1615 central daylight time, a Blanik L-13 glider, N640RM, collided with the ground while attempting a precautionary landing near Elberta, Alabama. The flight operated under 14 CFR Part 91 with no flight plan filed. Visual weather conditions prevailed at the time of the accident. The airplane sustained substantial damage and the two occupants were not injured. The flight departed Elberta at 1500 hours.

According to the pilot, he was returning to Elberta, when he encountered cloud buildups and a loss of lifting activity. He elected to land in a field but encountered a downdraft on short final and collided with the ground. No mechanical problems were reported.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Airline transport; Commercial; Military	Age:	31, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land; Multi-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Rear
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	Glider	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	Airplane single-engine	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 2 Valid Medical--no waivers/lim.	Last FAA Medical Exam:	March 31, 1993
Occupational Pilot:	Yes	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	2300 hours (Total, all aircraft), 27 hours (Total, this make and model), 1600 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 100 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 33 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 3 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	LET	Registration:	N640RM
Model/Series:	L-13 L-13	Aircraft Category:	Glider
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	025623
Landing Gear Type:	Tailwheel	Seats:	2
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	October 4, 1993 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	1050 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	82 Hrs	Engines:	0 Unknown
Airframe Total Time:	1284 Hrs	Engine Manufacturer:	
ELT:	Not installed	Engine Model/Series:	
Registered Owner:	COASTAL SOARING ASSOCIATES INC	Rated Power:	
Operator:	COASTAL SOARING ASSOCIATES INC	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:	MOB ,26 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	32 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	16:51 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	310°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Scattered / 5500 ft AGL	Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	7 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	30°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	29 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	31°C / 18°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	(A04)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:		Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	15:00 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:	Precautionary landing

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	2 None	Latitude, Longitude:	30.40913,-87.599952(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Powell, Phillip
Additional Participating Persons:	JACK KEESEY; BIRMINGHAM , AL
Original Publish Date:	November 3, 1993
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=3215

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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](#).