



# Aviation Investigation Final Report

<b>Location:</b>	JONESBORO, Arkansas	<b>Accident Number:</b>	FTW99LA243
<b>Date &amp; Time:</b>	August 30, 1999, 18:00 Local	<b>Registration:</b>	N3255Y
<b>Aircraft:</b>	Let                      BLANIK L-13	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Substantial
<b>Defining Event:</b>		<b>Injuries:</b>	2 Serious
<b>Flight Conducted Under:</b>	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

## Analysis

The glider struck a power line support pole while on final approach for landing at a private airstrip. According to the pilot, the glider encountered a high rate of sink on final approach. He retracted the spoilers and flaps, and thought he was going to clear the power lines. However, the glider impacted the power line support pole with the right wing, and fell to the ground.

## Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The pilot's misjudgment of distance/altitude during the final approach to landing, resulting in an undershoot, and collision with a power line pole.

## Findings

Occurrence #1: UNDERSHOOT  
Phase of Operation: APPROACH - VFR PATTERN - FINAL APPROACH

Findings  
1. (C) DISTANCE/ALTITUDE - MISJUDGED - PILOT IN COMMAND  
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Occurrence #2: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH OBJECT  
Phase of Operation: APPROACH - VFR PATTERN - FINAL APPROACH

Findings

2. OBJECT - POLE

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Occurrence #3: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER

Phase of Operation: DESCENT - UNCONTROLLED

## Factual Information

On August 30, 1999, approximately 1800 central daylight time, a Let Blanik L-13 glider, N3255Y, was substantially damaged when it impacted a power line support pole and terrain while on final approach to the Classic Airstrip near Jonesboro, Arkansas. The commercial pilot and his passenger were seriously injured. The glider was registered to the Classic Soaring Club of Jonesboro, Arkansas, and operated by the pilot. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed and a flight plan was not filed for the 14 Code of Federal Regulations Part 91 personal flight. The local flight originated at 1745.

During a telephone interview conducted by the NTSB investigator-in-charge, the pilot stated that he was "initially too high on final approach." He deployed the spoilers and flaps to lose some of the altitude. On short final, the glider encountered an "unexpected high rate of sink." The pilot added that he immediately retracted the spoilers and flaps and thought he "was going to clear the power lines," which ran across final approach. However, the glider impacted the power line support pole and fell to the ground. The glider came to rest upright facing the opposite direction from its final approach.

According to the FAA inspector, who visited the accident site, the glider's right wing was broken about 5 feet inboard from the tip, and the fuselage area aft of the cockpit was buckled.

### Pilot Information

<b>Certificate:</b>	Commercial; Flight instructor	<b>Age:</b>	54,U
<b>Airplane Rating(s):</b>	Single-engine land; Single-engine sea; Multi-engine land	<b>Seat Occupied:</b>	Rear
<b>Other Aircraft Rating(s):</b>	Glider; Gyroplane; Helicopter	<b>Restraint Used:</b>	
<b>Instrument Rating(s):</b>	Airplane; Helicopter	<b>Second Pilot Present:</b>	No
<b>Instructor Rating(s):</b>	Airplane single-engine; Instrument airplane; Instrument helicopter	<b>Toxicology Performed:</b>	No
<b>Medical Certification:</b>	Class 3 Valid Medical-w/ waivers/lim	<b>Last FAA Medical Exam:</b>	February 8, 1999
<b>Occupational Pilot:</b>	UNK	<b>Last Flight Review or Equivalent:</b>	
<b>Flight Time:</b>	3061 hours (Total, all aircraft), 7 hours (Total, this make and model), 67 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 22 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 3 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

## Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

<b>Aircraft Make:</b>	Let	<b>Registration:</b>	N3255Y
<b>Model/Series:</b>	BLANIK L-13 BLANIK L-1	<b>Aircraft Category:</b>	Glider
<b>Year of Manufacture:</b>		<b>Amateur Built:</b>	
<b>Airworthiness Certificate:</b>	Normal	<b>Serial Number:</b>	026304
<b>Landing Gear Type:</b>	Hull	<b>Seats:</b>	2
<b>Date/Type of Last Inspection:</b>	September 18, 1998 Annual	<b>Certified Max Gross Wt.:</b>	1101 lbs
<b>Time Since Last Inspection:</b>	51 Hrs	<b>Engines:</b>	Unknown
<b>Airframe Total Time:</b>	1050 Hrs	<b>Engine Manufacturer:</b>	
<b>ELT:</b>	Not installed	<b>Engine Model/Series:</b>	
<b>Registered Owner:</b>	CLASSIC SOARING CLUB	<b>Rated Power:</b>	
<b>Operator:</b>	SAMMIE V. WOOD	<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>	JBR ,262 ft msl	<b>Distance from Accident Site:</b>	18 Nautical Miles
<b>Observation Time:</b>	18:53 Local	<b>Direction from Accident Site:</b>	270°
<b>Lowest Cloud Condition:</b>	Clear	<b>Visibility</b>	9 miles
<b>Lowest Ceiling:</b>	None	<b>Visibility (RVR):</b>	
<b>Wind Speed/Gusts:</b>	9 knots /	<b>Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:</b>	/
<b>Wind Direction:</b>	30°	<b>Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:</b>	/
<b>Altimeter Setting:</b>	29 inches Hg	<b>Temperature/Dew Point:</b>	32°C / 17°C
<b>Precipitation and Obscuration:</b>	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
<b>Departure Point:</b>	, AR (NONE)	<b>Type of Flight Plan Filed:</b>	None
<b>Destination:</b>		<b>Type of Clearance:</b>	None
<b>Departure Time:</b>	17:45 Local	<b>Type of Airspace:</b>	Class G

## Airport Information

<b>Airport:</b>	CLASSIC AIRSTRIP	<b>Runway Surface Type:</b>	Grass/turf
<b>Airport Elevation:</b>	250 ft msl	<b>Runway Surface Condition:</b>	Dry
<b>Runway Used:</b>	36	<b>IFR Approach:</b>	
<b>Runway Length/Width:</b>	2600 ft / 150 ft	<b>VFR Approach/Landing:</b>	Full stop

## Wreckage and Impact Information

<b>Crew Injuries:</b>	1 Serious	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Substantial
<b>Passenger Injuries:</b>	1 Serious	<b>Aircraft Fire:</b>	None
<b>Ground Injuries:</b>	N/A	<b>Aircraft Explosion:</b>	None
<b>Total Injuries:</b>	2 Serious	<b>Latitude, Longitude:</b>	35.819126,-90.680183(est)

## Administrative Information

<b>Investigator In Charge (IIC):</b>	Lupino, Nicole
<b>Additional Participating Persons:</b>	RAYMOND G D'ANGELO; LITTLE ROCK , AR
<b>Original Publish Date:</b>	June 22, 2000
<b>Last Revision Date:</b>	
<b>Investigation Class:</b>	<a href="#">Class</a>
<b>Note:</b>	
<b>Investigation Docket:</b>	<a href="https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=47214">https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=47214</a>

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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](#).