



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Moriarty, New Mexico	Accident Number:	FTW02LA092
Date & Time:	March 12, 2002, 16:00 Local	Registration:	N333US
Aircraft:	Schleicher AS-W19	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	1 Minor
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The glider and tow plane and were climbing through 400-500 feet AGL, when both aircraft encountered turbulence. The glider was "climbing and sinking rapidly and the glider pilot could not neutralize the motion. She believed that she had enough altitude to turn and make a downwind landing, so she released the tow line. The pilot then turned back to the runway to make a downwind landing. While in the turn, the pilot received a radio call from the ground telling her to try to continue around to make a landing into the wind. The pilot attempted to follow the instructions from the person on the ground, and the left wing tip contacted the ground before the turn was completed. The pilot stated that if she had continued on her original plan to land downwind, then she thought that she could have made the landing without incident.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The pilot's attempt to perform a turn upwind at a altitude too low to complete the turn. A factor was the turbulence.

Findings

Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER
Phase of Operation: MANEUVERING - TURN TO REVERSE DIRECTION

Findings

1. (C) LOW ALTITUDE FLIGHT/MANEUVER - ATTEMPTED - PILOT IN COMMAND
2. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - TURBULENCE

Factual Information

On March 12, 2002, at 1600 mountain standard time, a Schleicher AS-W19 glider, N333US, registered to and operated by the pilot, was substantially damaged when impacted the ground while maneuvering to land on runway 26 at the Moriarty Municipal Airport, Moriarty, New Mexico. The private pilot, who was the sole occupant, sustained minor injuries. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed and a flight plan was not filed for the Title 14 Code of Federal Regulations Part 91 personal flight. The flight originated at 1557 from the Moriarty Airport.

According to information provided in the enclosed NTSB Pilot/Operator Accident Report (NTSB Form 6120.1/2), the glider was connected to the tow plane and was climbing through 400-500 feet AGL, when both aircraft encountered turbulence. The glider was "climbing and sinking rapidly and the glider pilot could not neutralize the motion. She believed that she had enough altitude to turn and make a downwind landing, so she released the tow line. The pilot then turned back to the runway to make a downwind landing. While in the turn, the pilot received a radio call from the ground telling her to try to continue around to make a landing into the wind. The pilot attempted to follow the instructions from the person on the ground, and the left wing tip contacted the ground before the turn was completed.

The pilot stated that if she had continued on her original plan to land downwind, then she thought that she could have made the landing without incident.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	Male
Airplane Rating(s):	None	Seat Occupied:	Front
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	Glider	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	None	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	None	Last FAA Medical Exam:	
Occupational Pilot:	No	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	80 hours (Total, all aircraft), 2 hours (Total, this make and model), 5 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 1 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 1 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Schleicher	Registration:	N333US
Model/Series:	AS-W19	Aircraft Category:	Glider
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Experimental (Special)	Serial Number:	19160
Landing Gear Type:	Retractable - Tailwheel	Seats:	1
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	March 10, 2002 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	900 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	1 Hrs	Engines:	
Airframe Total Time:	1357 Hrs at time of accident	Engine Manufacturer:	
ELT:	Not installed	Engine Model/Series:	
Registered Owner:	Janis E. White	Rated Power:	
Operator:		Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	ABQ,5355 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	
Observation Time:	15:56 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	Broken / 25000 ft AGL	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	8 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	330°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	20°C / 9°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Albuquerque, NM (OEO)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	Albuquerque, NM (OEO)	Type of Clearance:	Unknown
Departure Time:	15:57 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class G

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:	35.04,-106.609169

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Lemishko, Alexander
Additional Participating Persons:	Pamera Bell; FAA; Albuquerque, NM
Original Publish Date:	April 29, 2003
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=54332

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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](#).