



Aviation Investigation Final Report

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|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------|
| Location: | LaGrange, Georgia | Accident Number: | ATL04LA178 |
| Date & Time: | September 12, 2004, 13:30 Local | Registration: | N23Z |
| Aircraft: | Schleicher K6-CR | Aircraft Damage: | Substantial |
| Defining Event: | | Injuries: | 1 Fatal |
| Flight Conducted Under: | Part 91: General aviation - Personal | | |

Analysis

The glider collided with the ground while turning from downwind to base. Witnesses observed the glider "zoom" up and then make a left turn to base; after about 60-degrees of turn the glider entered into a nose-low, left wing low, left hand rotational spin, colliding with the ground in an almost 90-degree nose-low attitude after completing about 270-degrees of rotation. The wreckage was located in a field about one-quarter mile short of runway 13. The wreckage was contained to an area equivalent to the gliders wingspan. The airplane was on it belly and the cockpit was crushed aft and into the center section of the fuselage. An indentation in the ground containing cockpit debris was noted just forward of the gliders center section. Both wings as a unit had partially separated from the fuselage just aft of the cockpit area. The right wing was observed folded aft just inboard of the aileron. The vertical stabilizer was observed separated from the horizontal stabilizers and lying adjacent to its attach point to the horizontal stabilizers. Toxicology evaluation detected tetrahydrocannabinol (the primary active substance in marijuana) and its metabolite at levels consistent with very recent use, likely during or just prior to the flight. Toxicology evaluation also detected fluoxetine, a prescription antidepressant, and its metabolite at levels significantly higher than expected for even a maximal routine dose; and olanzapine, a prescription medication used for the treatment of schizophrenia and bipolar disorder (manic depression). The pilot did not indicate the use of prescription medications or the diagnosis of any mental conditions on his applications for airman medical certificate.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The pilot's failure to maintain control of the aircraft which resulted in a stall and subsequent impact with terrain. Factors were the pilot's impairment due to marijuana and his unreported mental conditions.

Findings

Occurrence #1: LOSS OF CONTROL - IN FLIGHT
Phase of Operation: APPROACH - VFR PATTERN - BASE TURN

Findings

1. (C) AIRSPEED - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND
2. (F) IMPAIRMENT(DRUGS) - PILOT IN COMMAND
3. STALL/SPIN - INADVERTENT - PILOT IN COMMAND
4. (F) PSYCHOLOGICAL CONDITION - PILOT IN COMMAND
5. USE OF INAPPROPRIATE MEDICATION/DRUG - PILOT IN COMMAND

Occurrence #2: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER
Phase of Operation: DESCENT - UNCONTROLLED

Findings

6. TERRAIN CONDITION - GROUND

Factual Information

HISTORY OF FLIGHT

On September 12, 2004 at 1330 eastern daylight time, a Schleicher K6-CR glider, N23Z, registered to a private owner, and operated by a private pilot, collided with the ground while turning from base leg to final approach for runway 13 at LaGrange Municipal Airport in LaGrange, Georgia. The personal flight was operated under the provisions of Title 14 CFR Part 91, and visual flight rules. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed and no flight plan was filed for the local pleasure flight. The pilot received fatal injuries and the glider sustained substantial damage. The flight originated in LaGrange, Georgia, on September 12, 2004, at 1230.

According to witnesses, they saw the glider on downwind for runway 13, about 200 feet above the ground. Just prior to the glider turning base they observed the glider "zoom" up and then make a left turn to base. It was from the "zoom" maneuver that the glider then made the turn. After about 60-degrees of turn the glider entered into a nose-low, left wing low, left hand rotational spin. The glider collided with the ground in an almost 90-degree nose-low attitude after completing about 270-degrees of rotation. Several witnesses telephoned the 911 operator and notified them of the accident, while others proceeded to the accident site to see if they could be of any assistance.

PERSONNEL INFORMATION

A review of information on file with the Federal Aviation Administration Airman's Certification Division, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, revealed that the pilot was issued a private pilot certificate with ratings for single engine land and a Glider. A review of records on file with the FAA Aero Medical Records revealed the pilot held a third class medical certificate issued on May 20, 2004, with no restrictions. The pilot reported on his application for the medical certificate that he had accumulated more than 500 total flight hours in all aircraft. A review of the pilot's personal logbook found that the pilot had accumulated 63 hours in gliders.

AIRCRAFT INFORMATION

A review of maintenance records revealed that the annual inspection was completed June, 2004, and had accumulated about 50 hours of flight time since that inspection. The gliders airframe total time at the time of the accident was about 900 hours.

WRECKAGE AND IMPACT INFORMATION

The wreckage was located in a field about one-quarter mile short of runway 13. The wreckage

was contained to an area equivalent the gliders wingspan. The airplane was on it belly and the cockpit was crushed aft and into the center section of the fuselage. An indentation in the ground containing cockpit debris was noted just forward of the gliders center section. Both wings as a unit had partially separated from the fuselage just aft of the cockpit area. The right wing was observed folded aft just inboard of the aileron. The vertical stabilizer was observed separated from the horizontal stabilizers and lying adjacent to its attach point to the horizontal stabilizers.

MEDICAL AND PATHOLOGICAL INFORMATION

The Division of Forensic Sciences Georgia Bureau of Investigation State of Georgia conducted a postmortem examination of the pilot on September 14, 2004. The reported cause of death was "Cervical Spine Fracture due to blunt force trauma of the neck, and the Manner of death was accident." The Forensic Toxicology Research Section, Federal Aviation Administration, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma performed a postmortem toxicology of the specimens from the pilot. There was no Carbon Monoxide or Cyanide detected in the blood, there was no Ethanol detected in the Vitreous. However, there was Tetrahydrocannabinol, Tetrahydrocannabinol Carboxylic acid (Marihuana) detected in the blood and liver. Also, there was Fluoxetine and Norfluoxetine detect in the blood and Fluoxetine was detected in the urine.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The glider wreckage was released to the registered owner on September 15, 2004

Pilot Information

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|----------------------------------|---|--|--------------|
| Certificate: | Private | Age: | 42, Male |
| Airplane Rating(s): | Single-engine land | Seat Occupied: | Center |
| Other Aircraft Rating(s): | Glider | Restraint Used: | |
| Instrument Rating(s): | None | Second Pilot Present: | No |
| Instructor Rating(s): | None | Toxicology Performed: | Yes |
| Medical Certification: | Class 3 Without waivers/limitations | Last FAA Medical Exam: | May 1, 2004 |
| Occupational Pilot: | Yes | Last Flight Review or Equivalent: | July 1, 2004 |
| Flight Time: | 502 hours (Total, all aircraft), 63 hours (Total, this make and model), 1 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft) | | |

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

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|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------|
| Aircraft Make: | Schleicher | Registration: | N23Z |
| Model/Series: | K6-CR | Aircraft Category: | Glider |
| Year of Manufacture: | | Amateur Built: | |
| Airworthiness Certificate: | Normal | Serial Number: | 554 |
| Landing Gear Type: | Tailwheel | Seats: | 1 |
| Date/Type of Last Inspection: | June 1, 2004 Annual | Certified Max Gross Wt.: | 670 lbs |
| Time Since Last Inspection: | 50 Hrs | Engines: | |
| Airframe Total Time: | 900 Hrs as of last inspection | Engine Manufacturer: | |
| ELT: | Not installed | Engine Model/Series: | |
| Registered Owner: | Raymond E. LaRocque | Rated Power: | |
| Operator: | David A. Maultsby | Operating Certificate(s) Held: | None |

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

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|---|----------------------------------|---|------------------|
| Conditions at Accident Site: | Visual (VMC) | Condition of Light: | Day |
| Observation Facility, Elevation: | LGC,693 ft msl | Distance from Accident Site: | 0 Nautical Miles |
| Observation Time: | 13:20 Local | Direction from Accident Site: | 310° |
| Lowest Cloud Condition: | Few / 1100 ft AGL | Visibility | 10 miles |
| Lowest Ceiling: | None | Visibility (RVR): | |
| Wind Speed/Gusts: | 8 knots / | Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual: | / |
| Wind Direction: | 80° | Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual: | / |
| Altimeter Setting: | 30.13 inches Hg | Temperature/Dew Point: | 25°C / 19°C |
| Precipitation and Obscuration: | No Obscuration; No Precipitation | | |
| Departure Point: | LaGrange, GA (LGC) | Type of Flight Plan Filed: | None |
| Destination: | LaGrange, GA (LGC) | Type of Clearance: | None |
| Departure Time: | 12:30 Local | Type of Airspace: | |

Airport Information

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|-----------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------|
| Airport: | Lagrange Callaway LGC | Runway Surface Type: | Asphalt |
| Airport Elevation: | 700 ft msl | Runway Surface Condition: | |
| Runway Used: | 13 | IFR Approach: | None |
| Runway Length/Width: | 5600 ft / 150 ft | VFR Approach/Landing: | Traffic pattern |

Wreckage and Impact Information

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|----------------------------|---------|-----------------------------|---------------------|
| Crew Injuries: | 1 Fatal | Aircraft Damage: | Substantial |
| Passenger Injuries: | | Aircraft Fire: | None |
| Ground Injuries: | N/A | Aircraft Explosion: | None |
| Total Injuries: | 1 Fatal | Latitude, Longitude: | 33.01472,-85.076667 |

Administrative Information

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| Investigator In Charge (IIC): | Wilson, Ralph |
| Additional Participating Persons: | Jerry Brooks; Atlanta FSDO; College Park, GA |
| Original Publish Date: | September 13, 2005 |
| Last Revision Date: | |
| Investigation Class: | Class |
| Note: | |
| Investigation Docket: | https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=60137 |

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](#).