



Aviation Investigation Final Report

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| Location: | Cleburne, Texas | Accident Number: | DFW08LA220 |
| Date & Time: | August 31, 2008, 14:18 Local | Registration: | N30WK |
| Aircraft: | Schleicher ASW-20B | Aircraft Damage: | Substantial |
| Defining Event: | Unknown or undetermined | Injuries: | 1 Fatal |
| Flight Conducted Under: | Part 91: General aviation - Personal | | |

Analysis

While performing a landing into an open field, the glider pilot experienced a loss of control and impacted terrain. An examination of the wreckage did not reveal any pre-impact anomalies. A review of the Cambridge Aero Instrument data recording device displayed that after failing to acquire thermal lift, the pilot maneuvered for a left base pattern to a grass field. A low level of diphenhydramine, an over the counter sedating antihistamine often known by the trade name Benadryl, was found in the pilot's blood, well below the concentrations normally associated with impairment.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: Loss of control inflight for undetermined reason.

Findings

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| Aircraft | (general) - Not attained/maintained |
| Not determined | (general) - Unknown/Not determined |

Factual Information

History of Flight

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| Approach | Unknown or undetermined (Defining event) |
| Approach | Loss of control in flight |
| Uncontrolled descent | Collision with terr/obj (non-CFIT) |

On August 31, 2008, at approximately 1418 central daylight time, a Schleicher ASW-20B glider, N30WK, was substantially damaged upon impact with terrain near Cleburne, Texas. The commercial pilot, the sole occupant, was fatally injured. The glider was owned and operated by a private individual. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed and no flight plan was filed for the 14 Code of Federal Regulations Part 91 personal flight. The flight originated from TSA Gliderport (TA11), Midlothian, Texas as a local flight at approximately 1326.

A local resident contacted emergency services to inform them that a glider had crashed. An inspector from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) also responded and documented the crash site. The glider impacted an open field near a residence. The flaps were set to "2" corresponding with -6 degrees of flaps (flaps up 6 degrees). The wreckage was recovered to a secure location for examination.

An examination was conducted by the NTSB Investigator-in-Charge. Flight control continuity was established to the rudder, elevator, and ailerons. Continuity to the airbrakes and flaps was also established. No pre-impact anomalies were discovered with the airframe.

The accident flight was recorded by an Cambridge Aero Instruments data recording device. An examination of the data revealed that the glider was towed from TA11 and began a flight to the southwest of the airport. The device recorded several successful attempts to thermal the glider. At approximately 1355 the glider began maneuvering to obtain thermal lift, but continued to descend. The flight continued over a field and the glider appeared to enter a normal left traffic pattern. The last recorded point was at 1417 with the glider at 895 feet mean sea level (about 150 feet above ground level), traveling 29 miles per hour, in a descent of approximately 390 feet per minute on "final approach" leg.

The glider pilot had logged over 5,279 hours in various military and civilian aircraft. The pilot had logged approximately 399 hours in gliders with at least 7.5 hours in the accident glider.

An autopsy was performed on the pilot by the Tarrant County Medical Examiner's Office, Fort Worth, Texas. The medical examiner ruled the manner of death as a result of multiple blunt force trauma.

Forensic toxicology was performed on specimens from the pilot by the FAA Bioaeronautical

Sciences Research Laboratory, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. The toxicology report stated the presence of carbon monoxide, cyanide, was ethanol was not detected. The report notes:

DIPHENHYDRAMINE detected in Blood
DIPHENHYDRAMINE detected in Liver
IBUPROFEN detected in Blood

According to the Chief of the FAA Forensic Toxicology Research Team, diphenhydramine was not quantified in the pilot's blood because the level was below the laboratory's calibration curve.

At 1425, an automated weather reporting station located at Cleburne Municipal Airport (CPT), located approximately 9 miles northwest of the accident site reported winds from 120 degrees at 4 knots, visibility 10 miles, skies clear, temperature 90 degrees Fahrenheit, dew point 72 degrees Fahrenheit and a barometric pressure of 29.96 inches of Mercury.

Pilot Information

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| Certificate: | Commercial | Age: | 71, Male |
| Airplane Rating(s): | Single-engine land | Seat Occupied: | Single |
| Other Aircraft Rating(s): | Glider | Restraint Used: | |
| Instrument Rating(s): | Airplane | Second Pilot Present: | No |
| Instructor Rating(s): | None | Toxicology Performed: | Yes |
| Medical Certification: | Class 3 Without waivers/limitations | Last FAA Medical Exam: | July 11, 2003 |
| Occupational Pilot: | UNK | Last Flight Review or Equivalent: | August 22, 2007 |
| Flight Time: | 5279 hours (Total, all aircraft), 8 hours (Total, this make and model), 1 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 5 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft) | | |

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

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| Aircraft Make: | Schleicher | Registration: | N30WK |
| Model/Series: | ASW-20B | Aircraft Category: | Glider |
| Year of Manufacture: | | Amateur Built: | |
| Airworthiness Certificate: | Experimental (Special) | Serial Number: | 20641 |
| Landing Gear Type: | Retractable - Tailwheel | Seats: | 1 |
| Date/Type of Last Inspection: | March 30, 2008 Annual | Certified Max Gross Wt.: | 1157 lbs |
| Time Since Last Inspection: | | Engines: | |
| Airframe Total Time: | 1513 Hrs at time of accident | Engine Manufacturer: | |
| ELT: | Not installed | Engine Model/Series: | |
| Registered Owner: | James Rider | Rated Power: | |
| Operator: | James Rider | 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: | CPT,854 ft msl | Distance from Accident Site: | 9 Nautical Miles |
| Observation Time: | 14:25 Local | Direction from Accident Site: | 325° |
| Lowest Cloud Condition: | Clear | Visibility | 10 miles |
| Lowest Ceiling: | None | Visibility (RVR): | |
| Wind Speed/Gusts: | 4 knots / | Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual: | / |
| Wind Direction: | 120° | Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual: | / |
| Altimeter Setting: | 29.95 inches Hg | Temperature/Dew Point: | 32°C / 22°C |
| Precipitation and Obscuration: | No Obscuration; No Precipitation | | |
| Departure Point: | MIDLOTHIAN, TX (TA11) | Type of Flight Plan Filed: | None |
| Destination: | | Type of Clearance: | None |
| Departure Time: | 13:26 Local | Type of Airspace: | |

Wreckage and Impact Information

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| Crew Injuries: | 1 Fatal | Aircraft Damage: | Substantial |
| Passenger Injuries: | N/A | Aircraft Fire: | None |
| Ground Injuries: | N/A | Aircraft Explosion: | None |
| Total Injuries: | 1 Fatal | Latitude, Longitude: | 32.276943,-97.313331(est) |

Administrative Information

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| Investigator In Charge (IIC): | Aguilera, Jason |
| Additional Participating Persons: | Mike Haley; FAA FSDO; Fort Worth, TX |
| Original Publish Date: | January 29, 2009 |
| Last Revision Date: | |
| Investigation Class: | Class |
| Note: | |
| Investigation Docket: | https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=68849 |

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](#).