



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Lebanon, Connecticut	Accident Number:	ERA14LA462
Date & Time:	September 28, 2014, 11:52 Local	Registration:	N3740A
Aircraft:	QUICKSILVER EIPPER ACFT INC GT 400	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:	Controlled flight into terr/obj (CFIT)	Injuries:	1 Serious
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The pilot reported that, during the takeoff from a private airstrip, he used only about half of the available runway length. The ultralight airplane reached about 8 to 10 ft above the ground, and the pilot thought it would clear trees at the end of the runway, so he continued the climb. The nose landing gear subsequently cleared the trees, but the main landing gear caught a treetop. The airplane then turned right, stalled, and descended through the trees to the ground. The airplane was heading into gusting wind during the takeoff. A witness reported hearing the engine running after the accident, and the pilot did not report any preexisting mechanical anomalies that would have precluded normal operation.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be:

The pilot's misjudgment of the takeoff distance needed to clear trees at the end of the runway.

Findings

Aircraft	Climb capability - Capability exceeded
Personnel issues	Decision making/judgment - Pilot

Factual Information

History of Flight

Initial climb	Controlled flight into terr/obj (CFIT) (Defining event)
Initial climb	Loss of control in flight

On September 28, 2014, at 1152 eastern daylight time, a Quicksilver Eipper GT 400, N3740A, was substantially damaged when it impacted trees while taking off from a private airstrip in Lebanon, Connecticut. The non-certificated pilot was seriously injured. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed, and no flight plan had been filed for the flight to Richmond Airport (08R), West Kingston, Rhode Island, under the provisions of 14 Code of Federal Regulations Part 91.

According to a witness, she was sitting in her living room when she heard what sounded like an airplane taking off from the airstrip located beyond the trees in her back yard. It sounded very loud and low, so she ran to a window at the back of her house to see if it would clear the trees when she heard it hit the trees and then crash. She heard the engine still running for a few minutes after the crash and then it stopped.

The pilot was interviewed by a Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) inspector while recovering in the hospital. According to the inspector, the pilot had flown the airplane from his home airport [08R] to the uncontrolled, private airstrip. It had been about 8 years since he had last flown there, and the pilot was unaware that the airstrip had been shortened by about 200 feet. The pilot did not speak to anyone and stayed there about an hour. When he decided to depart, he configured the airplane with 10-degree flaps, and departed to the [north]west. In an attempt to clear trees beyond the end of the runway, he pulled back on the control stick and stalled the airplane into those trees.

In further correspondence with the NTSB, the pilot stated that he only used about half of the runway to take off. About 8 to 10 feet in the air, the pilot thought the airplane would clear trees at the end of the runway, and he continued the climb. The nose landing gear cleared the trees, but the main landing gear caught the top of a tree. The airplane then turned to the right, stalled, and descended through the trees to the ground.

Winds, recorded at a nearby airport at the time of the accident, were from 340 degrees true at 8, gusting 18 knots. Estimated dimensions of the airstrip from a Google Earth view were about 1,050 feet by 40 feet, oriented 290/110 degrees true.

The airplane was originally operated under Federal Air Regulations Part 103 for ultralight aircraft. The airplane was registered in 2007, but that registration expired in 2012. The pilot did not possess a pilot certificate, but indicated that he had flown an estimated 2,500 hours in ultralights with about 500 hours in make and model.

The pilot did not report any preexisting mechanical anomalies that would have precluded normal airplane operation.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	None	Age:	69
Airplane Rating(s):	None	Seat Occupied:	Single
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	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:	2500 hours (Total, all aircraft), 500 hours (Total, this make and model), 10 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	QUICKSILVER EIPPER ACFT INC	Registration:	N3740A
Model/Series:	GT 400	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:	1989	Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Unknown	Serial Number:	GT 2801051
Landing Gear Type:	Tricycle	Seats:	1
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	Unknown	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	570 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:		Engine Manufacturer:	ROTAX
ELT:	Not installed	Engine Model/Series:	503
Registered Owner:	On file	Rated Power:	50 Horsepower
Operator:	On file	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	IJD,246 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	9 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	15:52 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	15°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Few / 3900 ft AGL	Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	8 knots / 18 knots	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/ None
Wind Direction:	340°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/ N/A
Altimeter Setting:	29.84 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	26°C / 13°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Lebanon, CT (NONE)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	Lebanon, CT (NONE)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	11:52 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Airport Information

Airport:	Private Airstrip NONE	Runway Surface Type:	Grass/turf
Airport Elevation:	540 ft msl	Runway Surface Condition:	Dry
Runway Used:	29	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:	1050 ft / 40 ft	VFR Approach/Landing:	None

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Serious	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:		Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 Serious	Latitude, Longitude:	41.601665,-72.230834(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Cox, Paul
Additional Participating Persons:	Herman Carvache; FAA/FSDO; Windsor Locks, CT
Original Publish Date:	June 1, 2015
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	The NTSB did not travel to the scene of this accident.
Investigation Docket:	https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=90175

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](#).