
 National Transportation Safety Board FACTUAL REPORT AVIATION		NTSB ID: FTW97FA249		Aircraft Registration Number: N80077	
		Occurrence Date: 07/05/1997		Most Critical Injury: Fatal	
		Occurrence Type: Accident		Investigated By: NTSB	
Location/Time					
Nearest City/Place HOBBS		State NM	Zip Code 88240	Local Time 1722	Time Zone MDT
Airport Proximity: Off Airport/Airstrip		Distance From Landing Facility:			
Aircraft Information Summary					
Aircraft Manufacturer Schempp-Hirth		Model/Series VENTUS-2B /VENTUS-2B		Type of Aircraft Glider	
Revenue Sightseeing Flight: No			Air Medical Transport Flight: No		
Narrative					
Brief narrative statement of facts, conditions and circumstances pertinent to the accident/incident:					
<p>HISTORY OF FLIGHT</p> <p>On July 5, 1997, approximately 1722 mountain daylight time, a Schempp-Hirth Ventus-2B glider, N80077, was destroyed following a loss of control during the approach to an off airport landing near Hobbs, New Mexico. The commercial pilot, sole occupant of the glider, was fatally injured. The glider was being operated by the owner under Title 14 CFR Part 91. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed for the cross-country competition flight that departed Hobbs Industrial Airpark approximately 4 hours and 10 minutes before the accident. No flight plan had been filed.</p> <p>The pilot was involved in a week long Region 9 glider competition. Witnesses at the airpark reported to the Investigator-In-Charge (IIC) that this was the pilot's first entry into a regional event, although he had reportedly competed at the local level many times. The first day for practice flights was on June 29, 1997, and the competition flights began on June 30, 1997. Witnesses reported to the IIC that the pilot flew every day during the competition.</p> <p>On the day of the accident, the pilot departed at 1307 and crossed the starting gate at 5,000 feet agl approximately 20 minutes later. Witnesses reported to the IIC that approximately halfway to the first check point at Brownfield, Texas, a "low cloud deck moved in from the northeast, reducing the available lift." Witnesses stated that the "weather deteriorated to such a degree that 20 of the 38 competing gliders landed-out, and were unable to return to the finish line at Hobbs, New Mexico.</p> <p>The memory chip in the pilot's GPS navigational system indicated that the pilot flew to Brownfield, Texas, and then turned west towards Plains, Texas. He next proceeded south, then west, then south again towards the finish line. The last 10 minutes of stored data on his memory chip indicated that he was flying directly towards the approach end of runway 17 at the destination airport. The pilot performed a 360 degree turn approximately 2 minutes before impact, but the stored data indicated that his altitude remained constant. Approximately 200 feet agl, the last stored data point indicated that the pilot had turned eastbound (the IIC determined that this last stored data point was located on the south end of a flat, non-vegetated, cultivated field).</p> <p>According to witnesses at the destination airport, the pilot radioed that he was going "to land-out." A witness near the accident site reported to the IIC that she "heard the glider fly overhead and looked up to see it just above her house." The witness further reported that she saw the glider fly northbound and climb to "about 2, maybe 3 telephone poles height above the ground." The witness stated that the glider was "rocking back and forth like a kite, and then it spun to the left and hit the ground." The glider fell on some transmission wires as it impacted the ground.</p> <p>PERSONNEL INFORMATION</p>					
FACTUAL REPORT - AVIATION					

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Narrative (Continued)

According to the pilot's family, he had owned two previous gliders: a PIK-20 and a Ventus-II. The pilot's father reported that the pilot purchased the accident glider in early August 1996. The pilot's son reported to the IIC that the pilot had approximately 439 hours in gliders, and approximately 17,000 hours total flight time.

AIRCRAFT INFORMATION

The glider was built in Germany in 1995 and was given an Airworthiness Certificate for an experimental aircraft. It was approved for exhibition operations in the 15 meters racing class and had a maximum lift/drag ratio of 46:1 at 50 knots.

METEOROLOGICAL INFORMATION

The weather observation at 1748 for Lea County Airport (Hobbs, New Mexico) was: wind 130 degrees at 20 knots, visibility 25 statute miles, cloud condition 5,000 feet scattered and 15,000 broken, temperature 90 degrees Fahrenheit and a dew point of 61 degrees Fahrenheit, and the altimeter setting 30.01 inches. Witnesses at Hobbs Industrial Airpark (the destination airport) reported to the IIC that wind at the time of the accident was approximately 170 degrees for 18 knots with gusts to 26 knots.

Race officials reported to the IIC that weather conditions for glider flying on the day of the race were "marginal" due to lift conditions. Several pilots who were in the race reported to the IIC that lift conditions "deteriorated" during the race due to a weather system (including a low level cloud condition) which moved in from the northeast.

AIDS TO NAVIGATION & FLIGHT RECORDERS

The glider was equipped with a GPS navigational system which had a memory storage capability to retain the entire flight (ground track and altitude). See the attached flight records.

WRECKAGE IMPACT INFORMATION

The glider was found upright and partially suspended above the ground in transmission wires with a longitudinal axis orientation of approximately 170 degrees. The cockpit area of the glider was crushed (note the crush line in the photograph) and the fuselage was broken into two parts at the main landing wheel (the two parts were still attached). Both wing spars were broken outboard of their respective spoilers and the empennage was broken from the fuselage, but not separated, from the aircraft. The landing gear was found down, the spoilers were out, and the flaps were found in the plus 2 position. All parts and components of the glider were accounted for.

MEDICAL AND PATHOLOGICAL INFORMATION

Autopsy and toxicological tests were ordered and performed. The autopsy was done by the University of New Mexico Office of the Medical Investigator at Albuquerque, New Mexico, on July 7, 1997. Toxicology test results were negative.

ADDITIONAL DATA

The Soaring Society of America's Private/Commercial Flight Manual (see attached document) states that in preparation for an off-field landing by a pilot, "any time the sailplane descends to approximately 3,000 feet agl, it is time to begin a serious search for a suitable area." The manual further states that "by 1,500 feet, a specific field should be selected." Several glider pilot instructors reported to the IIC that "normal" traffic pattern entry should be performed at 1,000 feet agl or higher.

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Narrative (Continued)

The aircraft was released to the owner's representative on July 24, 1997.

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Landing Facility/Approach Information					
Airport Name	Airport ID:	Airport Elevation Ft. MSL	Runway Used 0	Runway Length	Runway Width
Runway Surface Type:					
Runway Surface Condition:					
Approach/Arrival Flown: NONE					
VFR Approach/Landing:					
Aircraft Information					
Aircraft Manufacturer Schempp-Hirth		Model/Series VENTUS-2B /VENTUS-2B		Serial Number 9	
Airworthiness Certificate(s): Experimental (Special); Special Flight (Special)					
Landing Gear Type:					
Amateur Built Acft? No	Number of Seats: 1	Certified Max Gross Wt. 1157 LBS	Number of Engines:		
Engine Type: Unknown	Engine Manufacturer:	Model/Series:	Rated Power:		
- Aircraft Inspection Information					
Type of Last Inspection Annual	Date of Last Inspection 03/1997	Time Since Last Inspection Hours	Airframe Total Time 275 Hours		
- Emergency Locator Transmitter (ELT) Information					
ELT Installed?/Type No	ELT Operated?	ELT Aided in Locating Accident Site?			
Owner/Operator Information					
Registered Aircraft Owner KENNETH R. OLSON		Street Address 32842 NORTH 66TH STREET			
		City CAVE CREEK	State AZ	Zip Code 85331	
Operator of Aircraft KENNETH R. OLSON		Street Address 32842 NORTH 66TH STREET			
		City CAVE CREEK	State AZ	Zip Code 85331	
Operator Does Business As:			Operator Designator Code:		
- Type of U.S. Certificate(s) Held: None					
Air Carrier Operating Certificate(s):					
Operating Certificate:			Operator Certificate:		
Regulation Flight Conducted Under: Part 91: General Aviation					
Type of Flight Operation Conducted: Personal					

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First Pilot Information

Name On File	City On File	State On File	Date of Birth On File	Age 52
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Sex: M	Seat Occupied: Center	Occupational Pilot? Civilian Pilot	Certificate Number: On File
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Certificate(s): Airline Transport; Flight Instructor; Commercial

Airplane Rating(s): Multi-engine Land; Single-engine Land

Rotorcraft/Glider/LTA: Glider; Helicopter

Instrument Rating(s): Airplane; Helicopter

Instructor Rating(s): Glider

Current Biennial Flight Review?

Medical Cert.: Class 1	Medical Cert. Status: Valid Medical--w/ waivers/lim.	Date of Last Medical Exam: 02/1997
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- Flight Time Matrix	All A/C	This Make and Model	Airplane Single Engine	Airplane Multi-Engine	Night	Instrument		Rotorcraft	Glider	Lighter Than Air
						Actual	Simulated			
Total Time	16800								439	
Pilot In Command(PIC)										
Instructor										
Instruction Received										
Last 90 Days										
Last 30 Days										
Last 24 Hours	4	4							4	

Seatbelt Used? Yes	Shoulder Harness Used? Yes	Toxicology Performed? Yes	Second Pilot? No
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Flight Plan/Itinerary

Type of Flight Plan Filed: None	
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Departure Point Same as Accident/Incident Location	State	Airport Identifier HBB	Departure Time 1307	Time Zone MDT
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Destination Local Flight	State	Airport Identifier	
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Type of Clearance: None

Type of Airspace: Class G

Weather Information

Source of Wx Information:

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Weather Information					
WOF ID	Observation Time	Time Zone	WOF Elevation	WOF Distance From Accident Site	Direction From Accident Site
HOB	1750	MDT	3659 Ft. MSL	8 NM	180 Deg. Mag.
Sky/Lowest Cloud Condition: Scattered			5000 Ft. AGL	Condition of Light: Day	
Lowest Ceiling: Broken		15000 Ft. AGL		Visibility: 25 SM	Altimeter: 30.00 "Hg
Temperature: 32 °C	Dew Point: 16 °C	Weather Conditions at Accident Site: Visual Conditions			
Wind Direction: 130		Wind Speed: 20		Wind Gusts:	
Visibility (RVR): 0 Ft.		Visibility (RVV) 0 SM			
Precip and/or Obscuration:					

Accident Information		
Aircraft Damage: Destroyed	Aircraft Fire: None	Aircraft Explosion: None

- Injury Summary Matrix	Fatal	Serious	Minor	None	TOTAL
First Pilot	1				1
Second Pilot					
Student Pilot					
Flight Instructor					
Check Pilot					
Flight Engineer					
Cabin Attendants					
Other Crew					
Passengers					
- TOTAL ABOARD -	1				1
Other Ground	0	0	0		0
- GRAND TOTAL -	1	0	0		1

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Administrative Information

Investigator-In-Charge (IIC)

JAMES F. STRUHSAKER

Additional Persons Participating in This Accident/Incident Investigation:

LEE BOEDEKER

LUBBOCK, TX