

National Transportation Safety Board

Office of Aviation Safety

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CEN23LA254

AIRCRAFT EXAMINATION NOTES

September 27, 2023

TABLE OF CONTENTS

A. ACCIDENT.....	3
B. AIRPLANE EXAMINATION NOTES	3
C. SUMMARY	3
D. DETAILS OF THE EXAMINATION.....	3
1.0 ACCIDENT SITE	3
2.0 AIRFRAME EXAMINATION.....	3
2.1 Fuselage.....	4
2.2 Empennage	5
2.3 Wings	5
3.0 AIRCRAFT INFORMATION	9

A. ACCIDENT

Location: Gregory, Michigan
Date: 6/21/2023
Time: 1530 EDT
Glider: LET L-23 Super Blanik glider

B. AIRCRAFT EXAMINATION NOTES

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C. SUMMARY

On June 21, 2023, about 1530 eastern daylight time, a Let L-23 Super Blanik, N10BR, was substantially damaged when it was involved in an accident near Richmond Field Airport (69G), Gregory, Michigan. The flight instructor was seriously injured, and the student pilot received minor injuries. The glider was operated as a Title 14 Code of Federal Regulations Part 91 instructional flight.

The student pilot reported that he had been flying the glider until about 10 minutes before the accident when the flight instructor assumed control of the glider and started looking for thermals to gain altitude. He said the flight instructor was mostly quiet until he said they were going to perform an off-field landing. The glider flew across a tree line at about 150 ft above ground level and turned to land in a bean field. The student had no further recollection of the accident.

The glider sustained substantial damage to the fuselage and left wing.

D. DETAILS OF THE EXAMINATION

1.0 Accident Site

The glider had been removed from the accident site. No site examination was conducted during this examination.

2.0 Airframe Examination

The glider was examined in a hangar at the Illinois Valley Regional Airport on September 27, 2023. The glider had been moved to this location for storage by the insurance company.

2.1 Fuselage

The fuselage was predominately intact but with a cut approximately mid-length that was made by the recovery crew for transport of the glider. At this cut location, the two rudder cables, the two elevator cables, and the two pitch trim cables had been cut by the recovery crew. The bottom of the forward fuselage was pushed upward and rearward by impact forces. The bending of the lower fuselage prevented full movement of the flight control sticks in the fore-aft direction, but full movement could be achieved in the left-right direction.



Figure 1. View of the glider fuselage during examination

Although limited fore-aft movement was achievable, movement of the forward cockpit control stick fore and aft resulted in movement of the aft cockpit control stick fore and aft, and movement of both elevator cables at the location where the fuselage had been cut. Side to side movement of the forward control stick resulted in side to side movement of the aft control stick, and movement of the aileron bellcrank located in the fuselage near the wing roots. The pushrods that connect this bellcrank to the bellcranks in the wing roots were in-place and intact and had been disconnected at their outboard ends. Movement of the spoiler control resulted in

movement of the spoiler torque shaft at the wing root. No preimpact anomalies were detected with respect to the fuselage or control system components within the fuselage.

2.2 Empennage

The empennage was intact and still attached to the fuselage except for the left elevator trim tab, which was separated. As previously mentioned, the rudder, elevator, and trim cables had been cut by the recovery crew for transport. Continuity of the cables was established from the fuselage cut to the control surfaces by pulling on the cables while noting movement of the appropriate control surface. No preimpact anomalies were detected with respect to the empennage.



Figure 2. Photo of the glider's empennage.

2.3 Wings

Both wings had been removed from the glider to facilitate transport.

The right wing was intact and the spoiler deflected when the torque shaft was rotated. The aileron deflected when the wing root bellcrank was moved. No anomalies were detected with respect to the right wing.



Figure 3. Right wing of glider during examination.

The outboard approximately 6 feet of the left wing, including the aileron was separated from the inboard portion of the wing. A portion of the rod end remained attached to the aileron and was separated from the pushrod in the wing. Movement of the aileron wing root bellcrank resulted in movement of the broken pushrod. Movement of the spoiler torque shaft resulted in movement of the spoiler. No pre-impact anomalies were detected with respect to the left wing.



Figure 4. Left wing of glider during examination.



Figure 5. Photo showing the end of the left wing at the separation location.



Figure 6. Separated section of left wing and left aileron.

3.0 Aircraft Information

During the examination, the maintenance records were reviewed. There was an entry dated 5/5/2023 that indicated the glider had undergone an annual maintenance inspection on that date. Another entry dated 5/13/2023 indicated that a "Return to service flight" had been successfully completed with a note "good for all flights"

Submitted by:

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