



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Timothy W. Monville
Sr. Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region

Date: August 19, 2016
Person Contacted: Edward R. "Roger" Jones
NTSB Accident Number: ERA16LA274

Narrative:

Mr. Jones was contacted by phone on July 29, 2016, at 1422 EDT. He was called at [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

At the beginning of the phone call he was advised that the NTSB is a federal agency mandated by Congress to investigate aircraft accidents, and NTSB has no authority to take any action against any individual. He was also informed that the purpose of an NTSB investigation is for safety only, and any person NTSB talks with has the right to representation; he agreed to the interview without representation.

He provided an address of [REDACTED] Berea, Kentucky [REDACTED], and an e-mail address of [REDACTED]. He indicated that his date of birth is [REDACTED] and his pilot certificate number is [REDACTED]. He holds a private pilot certificate with airplane single engine land and glider ratings, with a self-launching glider endorsement. He was issued a 3rd class medical certificate to wear corrective lenses on September 19, 2014; he was wearing contact lenses at the time of the accident. His last flight review in accordance with 14 CFR Part 61.56 was conducted in a Cessna 150 on May 7, 2015.

The glider, N602SL, an Alisport SRL Silent 2 Targa, is based at the London-Corbin Airport-Magee Field (LOZ), London, KY. It is a single place motor-glider that is equipped with a single cylinder engine in the tractor configuration that is retractable; the engine operates at 6,500 rpm. The glider is made from fiberglass and carbon fiber that was designed and built in Italy. The empty weight is 407 pounds, and the maximum gross weight is 660 pounds. It is equipped with a single bladed propeller that has a counterweight. It is also equipped with a retractable landing gear in the center of the fuselage, and has a maximum glide ratio (max lift/drag) of 40:1 at 55 mph. It also has a tailwheel that is steerable. It is equipped with a GPS receiver permanently installed, but the receiver does not have a display and it does not retain data. There was no

recording device in the glider at the time of the accident. He is the 3rd owner, and he purchased it about 3 years earlier (FAA records indicated he purchased it on June 13, 2014). Since owning the glider, he indicated that he has not flown it much due to mechanical issues; or about 6 hours. He indicated the contact for the North American Distributor of the glider is Leo Benetti-Longhini, whose cell phone number is [REDACTED]

He provided the following timeline:

June 2015 to the Beginning of April 2016 –

The glider was grounded due to subtle issues that caused the engine to fail to fire. His mechanic, who was the same mechanic that worked on it for the second owner discovered a cracked engine mount, and also a separated pin at a communications plug, which controls the engine on the reflux loop. His mechanic resoldered the pin at the communications plug, and since then he has operated the glider for about 2 hours with no issues.

Since the glider was returned to service, due to the extensive down time, in the last two to three weeks, he has reacquainted himself with the ground handling characteristics of the glider, which included practicing slow and fast taxiing.

July 24, 2016 (Sunday) –

He planned this day as a flying day. He arrived at the airport where the glider was based at 9:30 a.m. and noted the sky was clear and there was little wind. He had planned two pattern flights, then an assessment of wind and thermal conditions before a possible third flight. On the first flight he self-launched and climbed to 2,000 feet above ground level (agl), where he secured the engine, centered the propeller, and retracted the engine. He remained in the traffic pattern, landed, extended the engine and then taxied the glider to the ramp. He secured the glider, exited it, and did a walk-around pre-flight inspection, had a drink of water, and kissed his wife.

He planned a second flight that same day and hoped to find thermals. He boarded the glider for a second flight, buckled in and fully latched the canopy, but noted the right latch did not seat properly. He cycled the right canopy latch and noted it was then seated OK, and then started the engine. He taxied onto runway 24, and was wearing the 3-point restraint along with a parachute. He advanced the throttle for takeoff about 1030, with about 3 gallons of two-cycle fuel mixed 50:1, and accelerated noting the engine was at 6,500 rpm. He became airborne, and at 500 feet agl he turned onto the crosswind leg, then onto the downwind leg. While at 700 feet agl and 50 mph, he heard a thump on his right knee, and the right canopy latch released allowing the right side of the canopy to raise about 1 inch along its full length; the right canopy lever was full forward at the time. He indicated that his glider was not equipped with a secondary canopy latch which would prevent full opening of the canopy. He thought he could close the canopy, but the left side then released, followed by the nose. He thought about jettisoning the canopy but was concerned because the engine was operating and the canopy might go straight into the propeller. Even with the engine off, he would be faced with a 40 to 50 mph wind in his face. If he lost his sunglasses, his contact-lensed eyes might not tolerate that wind and he would be effectively blinded. He made the decision to attempt to save the canopy, and secured the engine but he did

not center the propeller nor retract the engine. He wrestled to keep the canopy closed and when he slowed the glider, the nose of the canopy came up. While wrestling to hold the canopy he turned base to final but realized he had drifted too far from the runway. While descending at 50 mph, he was forced to fly the glider into trees short of the runway. The left wing impacted a tree about 15 feet agl. The glider then stopped, twisted, and descended nose-first at a 45-degree angle into dense brush. He reported that the left wing was “gone” but the right wing was intact. He assessed his physical state ([REDACTED] which he speculated came from contact with the wheel retract mechanism, but it was only [REDACTED]; he did not have any broken bones. He got out of the cockpit, and because he did not have a cellular phone and doubted anyone would have been monitoring the airport Unicom frequency, he pushed through the brush along an adjacent fence line and walked to the airport, where he met his wife. She drove him to the emergency room of the local hospital for treatment of his injury. He was released between 1900 and 2000 hours. The [REDACTED] in his left arm from about [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

He was asked if he saw any birds and he indicated that he did not. He mentioned that while descending following the canopy coming open, he flew near/past a mobile homes sales office, and later was informed that security cameras for that facility captured the descent. The owner of the mobile home sales business has indicated that after the insurance settlement has been concluded (there was some damage to the fence of the business, and to the roof of a home) he may apply to their lawyer for a copy of the video. He was informed that the video was time stamped and it indicated the time of the accident was 1037 EDT. He was advised that NTSB would like to get a copy of the video and he advised he would provide me a copy.

With respect to the canopy, it consists of a fiberglass frame but there are no cross members; it can be “twisty.” He indicated that there were no issues related to the canopy from the first owner of the glider who flew it for about 10 hours, or from the second owner who had flown it about 400 hours. Further, historically excluding the accident flight, there have been no issues with the canopy either being partially or imperfectly latched.

He indicated that during the accident flight, he used the checklist, which was in the cockpit at the time of the accident.

He indicated that the insurance adjuster is Aaron Hatch, of AIG located in Atlanta, Georgia. His contact is [REDACTED]

The digest was e-mailed to him for review on August 1, 2016, at 1143 EDT. He replied on August 2, 2016, at 1259 EDT, with comments that were incorporated into the narrative. The corrective narrative was sent to him for review on August 2, 2016, about 1555 EDT. He replied the same day at 2344 EDT, with, “Tim, The changes you made bring the document into accord

with my understanding of things. The only thing I might still mention -- in page 1, paragraph, maybe stick to present tense in the description of the airplane: "The airplane was equipped ..." occurs a couple of times and should be changed to "The airplane is equipped ..." Other than that, I'm ready to sign off on the document.

I'll get you the maintenance records scan and engine/airframe hours tomorrow. Thanks, Roger." These changes were incorporated into the narrative.