

SAFETY INFORMATION AND REPORTING SYSTEM (SIRS)- ADMINISTRATION

MISHAP MANAGEMENT | **STATEMENTS** | JOURNAL NOTES | INITIAL NOTIFICATION | ADDITIONAL INFORMATION | AIRCRAFT INFORMATION | ADD PERSON TO MISHAP

Witness Statements

Date	Entered By	Person Type	Statement
17 Aug 2021	LT COL MARK C. FARLEY	CHECK PILOT	3d flight for a glider Form 5 - simulated rope break at 200 feet. Departed runway 5 at Hartness State Airport (just north of the hold short of runway 29/11, approximately 4,500 feet of useable runway), N. Springfield, VT. Plan was to conduct a simulated rope break at 200 feet AGL, and return to land on the left grass of runway 23. I pulled the release and after executing the 180 degree turn back to runway 23, we both quickly realized that we would not clear the trees north of the approach end of runway 23. After quickly discussing options, we decided to turn approximately 90 degrees to the left (southeast). Our intended touchdown at this point was the lake. After executing the turn, I pointed out the road to our left and Lt Col Dickinson made another 90 degree left turn with an intended landing on a narrow (approximately 35 feet wide) dirt road. We touched down in tall vegetation (approximately 3 feet high) 3-5 feet to right of the mowed grass on the right side of the dirt road. Landing trajectory was diagonal right to left across the road. We crossed the road and after about 200 feet (our main landing gear was now near the left side of the road/grass), our left wing (5-6 feet from the wingtip) impacted a 5-6 inch diameter tree at approximately 7 feet from the ground. Groundspeed at the time of tree impact was probably still 30+ mph. This impact caused us to quickly rotate 90 degrees to the left and the nose of the glider came to a rest approximately 5 feet from the left runway edge in tall vegetation. Neither of us was hurt. We exited the glider, communicated with the tow pilot to inform him that we were uninjured, and began inspecting the damage. Lt Col Dickinson did a masterful job of flying. He executed a 180 degree turn from approximately 100 feet AGL, and landed wings level. We communicated well, and jointly decided to land on the road. Lt Col Dickinson had the controls for the entire flight.
17 Aug 2021	LT COL MALCOLM M. DICKINSON	OTHER	I was taking an annual Form 70-5G checkride. I informed the check pilot that my most recent CAPF70-5G was expired; he said that he would be PIC. We were using runway 5 at VSF towed by a CAP C-182. We had completed two flights in the glider. The check pilot informed me that the third flight would be a simulated rope break from 200 feet AGL. We reviewed the procedure (immediate 45-degree-bank left turn to land on runway 23). The check pilot, in the front seat, called the tow pilot on the radio to request he sidestep right on upwind further than normal, to allow for enough distance between the upwind leg and the runway. After a normal takeoff, the tow plane sidestepped further right than the first two flights. As we climbed out, I was watching the altimeter, anticipating the moment the check pilot would pull the release. I noticed it took longer than normal to get to 200 AGL. Eventually the altimeter reached 800 MSL, I made the "200 feet" call, and the check pilot pulled the release. I immediately made a steep turn direct to the numbers of runway 23. Upon leveling the wings and establishing best glide speed, I was concerned that the runway looked too far away (beyond glide distance). I said so and the check pilot agreed that it looked iffy. He verified that I was flying at the best L/D glide speed and we continued toward the runway. A few seconds later, we agreed that it looked like we would not make it over the trees that stood between us and the end of runway 23. I asked the check pilot what he wanted me to do, and he said we would have to set down in the swamp to our left. As I turned away from the runway, extended the dive brakes, and descended toward the swamp, he pointed out a dirt road and said we might be able to set the glider down there. I banked sharply, slipped aggressively, and set the glider down along the edge of the clear area alongside the dirt road. As the glider was rolling out on the dirt road, there was a sudden noise and swerve to the left. We exited the glider to find that the left wing had contacted a small tree (about 6" in diameter) that stood about 20 feet west of the center of the road. The impact with the tree brought the glider to a sudden stop and damaged the left wing. Contributing factors to the mishap were my unfamiliarity with the area, which led me to depend on the check pilot's knowledge of the area. I was concentrating on my performance during the checkride, not on whether our release point was close enough to the airport.