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Aviation Accident Investigator
OAS-ERA

Date: June 11, 2026

Subject: ERA26LA207, Record of Conversation

Contact: [REDACTED], President, Merlin Soaring Association

Mr. [REDACTED] was interviewed via telephone on June 10, 2026. Mr. [REDACTED] was informed that his statement would be transcribed into a memorandum for record that would be part of the public docket. Below is a summary of the interview.

Question: I spoke with Mr. [REDACTED] and he described the airport as having a grass runoff area where gliders can pull off. Can you please explain how this operation works?

We have a taxiway designed so they (gliders) can taxi without stopping on the runway so there are no go arounds, which we encourage to maintain a clear runway. It is designed so the runway stays clear. This is what [REDACTED] did so he wouldn't obstruct the runway.

Question: Can you discuss the day of the accident?

[REDACTED] operated the tow airplane and was also a glider pilot and was trained to do the launch and run the tow lines. We flew around and [REDACTED] disconnected and I came in and landed to the north and went off the North taxiway and parked by the propane tank. I have to park completely off so the tow rope is off the runway. Before the launch [REDACTED] talked to [REDACTED] told him they would be landing and rolling off on the south taxiway. When I landed [REDACTED] was standing next to the taxiway sign and subsequently moved onto the taxiway while he was taking photos until he was hit. The glider was coming in from the south downwind so [REDACTED] wouldn't not have seen him until the final approach. He must have stepped out onto the taxiway to take the photographs. The glider hit him and spun around turned 90 degrees. [REDACTED] was unconscious and [REDACTED] began to work on him, and I called emergency services for help.

Does the association have a method of communication such as a new letter of sorts?

We do. We have a club email, and I also put out information about the incident without any specific information. We do have a safety officer, and we cover safety issues quarterly. This incident will be addressed at the next meeting.