

15 JUL 19

Incident report, glider aircraft accident at Air Sailing Gliderport on 14 JUL 19 at approximately 1230 PDT.

Persons involved:

Gene BENSON, tow pilot

Ron WUENSCH, glider pilot

Mark STORY, wing runner

Location [REDACTED], Air Sailing Gliderport, on runway 03/21 left.

Weather at the time of the incident:

Temperature about 88F

Wind variable with gusts from 5 to 15 kts, from about 210 to 190 degrees, which is about 20 to 30 degrees to the left of the runway heading for runway 21.

This report is written by BENSON.

The aircraft involved:

Piper Pawnee N4625Y

Diana 2 glider, SP-3778, tail ID Lima (L).

This incident occurred on 14 JUL 19, at about 1230 hours. This was the third glider tow takeoff of the day for BENSON. The previous two tows had taken off on runway 17/35. WUENSCH positioned his glider on runway 03/21 because of the crosswind component involved in the take off. WUENSCH has repeatedly expressed the difficulty of controlling this glider during crosswind operations.

BENSON positioned the Pawnee in the normal location for rope connection on runway 21. STORY was the wing runner for this launch. WUENSCH was in the cockpit of his glider. The rope was attached with the usual hand signals. Slack was removed from the line and BENSON awaited WUENSCH announcing that he was ready for takeoff. There was some additional noise on the radio from other operations. BENSON heard a statement about canopy being closed and static. BENSON confirmed with a second radio transmission, "Ron are you ready to go?" BENSON heard a reply of "Yeah". BENSON announced on the radio, "Air Sailing traffic, Blue tow taking off on runway 21 with glider in tow." BENSON advanced the throttle of Blue tow to full throttle and began the takeoff roll. At approximately half way down the asphalt portion of the runway, as the Pawnee tailwheel was lifted, BENSON performed the usual check of oil pressure, RPM and a mirror look at the glider in tow. BENSON noted that the glider in tow was not at the expected altitude above the runway where most gliders would be flying. The glider was possibly still rolling with tires on the pavement. The next time BENSON checked the mirrors was as the tow plane was flying off the ground with the airspeed indicated between 80 and 85 mph. The glider was noted to be extremely low, with a nose high attitude. During this brief moment of looking in the mirrors the glider was seen to yaw to his right, the right wing struck

sagebrush and ground. The glider was seen to be breaking up and crashing into the sagebrush on the north side of runway 21.

BENSON continued the flight of the tow plane and while turning crosswind called on the radio to Air Sailing ground that there has been an accident on runway 21.

BENSON flew a larger than standard pattern attempting to re-gather his composure. BENSON focused on the performing duties of the pilot of the Pawnee and brought the Pawnee to an uneventful landing on runway 21 right.

BENSON taxied the Pawnee to the normal ready position tiedowns to the east of runway 17/35. Shut down the Pawnee and tied the Pawnee in place.

BENSON walked to the nearest golf cart, at the clubhouse, and then drove the cart to his personal vehicle, where he got his first aid kit. With the first aid kit, BENSON proceeded to the accident site where there were several people standing and talking. BENSON observed, with great relief, that WUENSCH was standing near the wrecked glider. BENSON performed a brief medical assessment of WUENSCH and observed that WUENSCH had no obviously life threatening injury. WUENSCH had a laceration wound, about $\frac{3}{4}$ inch long on the back of his left hand, near his wrist. This injury was bandaged with cling and gauze. There were additional minor abrasions on WUENSCH abdomen and lower legs. WUENSCH complained of minor neck pain and had a small mark on his forehead. WUENSCH had no complaint of back pain, numbness or tingling. WUENSCH had no complaint when his pelvic girdle was palpated. WUENSCH was clearly alert and oriented times four.

WUENSCH wanted to recover his personal effects, especially his car keys, from the wreckage. BENSON wanted to assure that no fire could start in the wreckage, which required the removal of the battery from the wreckage. Prior to the adjustment of the wreckage several photos were taken of the debris. BENSON will post in a separate file the photos that he took.

After WUENSCH recovered his personal effects, and battery, from the wreckage all present went to the clubhouse. There WUENSCH cleaned, and examined his wounds. WUENSCH was advised to see a medical professional for further assessment. WUENSCH was provided the address and directions to the two closest urgent care medical facilities. WUENSCH determined that he was sufficiently well to drive himself to further care.

Both WUENSCH and STORY were provided with Chief Tow Pilot Tim Tobin's email address, hand written on BENSON's business card. Both were asked to please submit a written report of the incident to Chief Pilot Tobin for the Safety Committee.

END