



Memorandum for Record

Fabian Salazar
Air Safety Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board
Office of Aviation Safety – Western Pacific Region

NTSB Accident Number: WPR19FA241
Aircraft Registration & Make/Model: N300GG, Glaser-Dirks
Accident Location: Wikeson, WA.
Accident Date: August 25, 2019

Tim Heneghan
Witness
August 26, 2019

In an interview with Mr. Heneghan, he stated that he knew the accident pilot and he thought the accident pilot was not real experienced in gliders, but was, by no means, a novice. Mr. Heneghan stated that was a mentor to the accident pilot. He said that the accident pilot's goal was to fly his glider to Eatonville and back.

Mr. Heneghan said the accident day was a good weather day to fly. He said when he took off and tried to contact the accident pilot. The accident pilot was down south at about 2,500 feet MSL. He said that he did not visually observe the accident pilot but talked to him on the radio. Mr. Heneghan said that he asked the accident pilot where he was and where he was going. He said the accident pilot told him that he "was down south by the powerlines and going to where you are going" [meaning Eatonville]. About five minutes later, the accident pilot called Mr. Heneghan and told him that he was going to Burnett. At one-point the accident pilot said that he "was over Burnett, at 1,800' looking for lift".

Mr. Heneghan said that he thought the accident pilot flew conservatively. He stated that there are general rules for flying gliders like "if you are at 1000 feet, it is time to land". Mr. Heneghan stated that the accident pilot could be a little impatient and do things like depart a thermal prematurely or waiting for the thermal to cycle to the next lifting period.

He also stated that he was surprised that the accident pilot had attempted to land to the north. He stated that according to their common understanding, if you were going to land at Burnett, the best direction to land was to the south due to landing uphill. He said that it would also be easier for a tow plane to tow you downhill during the takeoff. He observed that it looked like the accident pilot was attempting to land to the north or downhill.



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Kenji Ominato
Witness
September 2, 2019

In a telephone interview with Mr. Ominato, he stated that he knew the accident pilot from about four years ago when he joined the club in about 2015 or 2016. He stated that he [Kenji] joined the club in late 1999. He thought that the accident pilot had first brought his glider to the field in June or July of 2017 and started flying it. Mr. Ominato said that they started flying together at that time.

He said that on the day of the accident, the accident pilot appeared to be anxious to fly. He was the field manager the day before and could not fly. At 10 O'clock the accident pilot was already at the airfield and had already assembled his glider fully but waited for Mr. Ominato to take off first. He stated that he assembled his glider and took off at about 12:20 or 1230. He said he took off first that day. He said the conditions were quite pleasant even though the ceilings were not as high as he was hoping. He said the cloud base was maybe up to 4000 or 4500 [feet].

He said that he was heading south and in between Lake Kapowsin and Eatonville he turned to head back to the north. At about 1315 to 1320, he heard the accident pilot was nearby northwest of Enumclaw over a ridgeline just east of WN76, had climbed up to 38 [3800 ft MSL] and announced he was heading to the Buckley / South Prairie area. Mr. Ominato said five minutes later he heard the accident pilot was heading towards South Prairie. Mr. Ominato asked about his altitude. The accident pilot replied that he was "2300 over Buckley." He said he was in a blue area, meaning there were no clouds. Mr. Ominato said that he was trying to help him, so he turned back to the south. Mr. Ominato said he found a nice thermal and began circling at about

4000 ft. He said that he spotted the accident pilot and thought that he was a “little bit low, but not extremely low”. He said that he was a reachable distance to the South Prairie and Burnett airport. Mr. Ominato said that he was at 4000 ft and the accident pilot was at 23 [2300 ft MSL]. He said that the accident pilot was slowly climbing and when asked again about his altitude, the accident pilot stated that he was at 38 [3800 ft MSL]. Mr. Ominato stated that after hearing the altitude, he was relieved and started heading back to the north. He said that he saw the accident pilot for the last time, when he reported his altitude of 3800 feet MSL, less than one mile east north-east of South Prairie and about 2 miles north-west of Burnett Airport.

Mr. Ominato stated that when he was just west of Enumclaw airport, he saw Mr. Heneghan heading to the south. Mr. Heneghan stated to Mr. Ominato that when he was over Burnett airport, he had a conversation with the accident pilot. Mr. Heneghan said that the accident pilot was reporting his position as mile northeast of South Prairie airport. He recalled the accident pilot asking Mr. Heneghan where are you going? He said that Mr. Heneghan said he was heading towards Eatonville and he remembered hearing the accident pilot say, “I am on the way”. He then stated that the accident pilot made a radio call stating that he was heading back to the Burnett airport. He said the last radio call he remembered was the accident pilot saying that he was flying over the Burnett airport. When he landed back a WN76, he learned that the accident pilot had crashed at Burnett. He thought the time was about 1730. Mr. Ominato added that the Burnett airport has a slope to the runway, and regardless of the wind, a pilot should approach from the north to the south and take off south to the north. He stated that he thought he had told the accident pilot this and was shocked to learn that his crash was on the very south end of the runway.

When asked about the accident pilot’s training, Mr. Ominato stated that the accident pilot was a very experienced pilot, and his ability to control the glider was very good. He needed no mentoring in that regard. He said that he was very confident that he had the skills to handle the glider. He added that the accident pilot was not as experienced as Mr. Heneghan and himself and was flying with them from time to time, to gain the experience in finding thermals.



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Jevon Simon
Witness / Burnett Field Homeowner
August 26, 2019

Mr. Simon and Mr. Brown Were outside on the approach end of runway 31. Said he saw the glider approach the airfield from the southeast at about 800 to 1000 feet. He said that it circled the airport about three to four times. He saw the pilot lower the landing gear as the plane was behind a stand of trees. He saw the pilot make a left bank of about 30-40 degrees. He then saw the glider's left wing strike a tree and the glider then began to spin and descend onto the runway in a nose-down attitude of about 75 degrees. He said the glider rebounded up a little then came back down. He ran to the glider, which was about 50 feet away and attempted to help the pilot.



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Chris Brown
Witness
August 26, 2019

Mr. Brown was outside visiting with Mr. Simon. He said that he saw the glider do about two turns around the airport. He saw the glider lower its landing gear behind the stand of trees. He saw the glider bank left then hit two sets of trees. He said that glider hit at a steep angle. After the glider hit the ground, Mr. Brown ran to the help the pilot.



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Carolyn Brown
Witness / Family Nurse Practitioner
August 26, 2019

Mrs. Brown was visiting with Mrs. Simon. She looked up and saw the glider circling overhead and asked if they “needed to get out of his way” She saw the glider clip the tree. She then turned around to see others running towards the glider that was on the ground. She got to the pilot and observed that he was breathing and grunting. She could feel that he had a threaded pules. She attended to him and decided it was best to leave him in the glider. They had called 911. She noticed that he was injured. She noticed that she could feel some type of electrical pulse occurring in his left upper chest. At one point the pilot became alert and talked with Mrs. Brown and the others. When the fire fighters arrived, they took over first aid and later transported him to the hospital.