

Cawthra Joshua

From: Michael Dworkin [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, May 22, 2020 12:10 PM
To: Cawthra Joshua; Arraiz, Michael (FAA)
Subject: Accident at Byron, California--May 9, 2020 (NTSB File No. WPR20LA141)
Attachments: Weisemann Narrative 5-22-20.docx

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Gentlemen:

Attached is a narrative of the above-referenced accident submitted by and on behalf of my client, the pilot of the glider, Mr. Claus Weisemann.

Mr. Weisemann is still suffering the effects of a head injury that he appears to have sustained.

Should you request further information or should you wish to interview Mr. Weisemann, please make all arrangements through my office. As I am working remotely during the COVID-19 crisis, the best way to reach me is via email or on my cell, [REDACTED]

My best wishes for an enjoyable holiday weekend.

Michael L. Dworkin

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Michael L. Dworkin
Managing Partner
AVIALEX LAW GROUP, LLP

[REDACTED]

To: NTSB—Joshua Cawthra, IIC

FAA—Inspector Michael Arraiz

Re: Accident at Byron, CA, May 9, 2020

Date: May 21, 2020

Pilot Background:

Pilot of Schweitzer 1-26, N65972 has a total of 2840 logged hours, about 107 of which are in gliders (approximately 395 flights). Pilot started glider flying in Germany in 1977 soloing but did not pursue license. Flying was interrupted by career and raising a family. Pilot resumed flying and obtained German Private Pilot License (powered aircraft) in 1989 and flew powered airplanes uninterrupted since that time.

Pilot and his family moved to the US in 1999. Pilot acquired FAA Instrument Rating, Commercial Pilot Certificate, CFI, CFI-I, Airplane Multi Engine Land and Multi Engine Instrument Ratings, Airline Transport Pilot Certificate and Airplane Single Engine Land Rating.

Pilot resumed glider flying in 2014 and obtained his Commercial Pilot-Glider Certificate in 2016 and CFI-Glider in 2018.

According to Pilot's logbook, total time/experience in Schweitzer 1-26 is 11 hours, 13 minutes, including the accident flight (36 flights). Pilot's last flight in a 1-26 prior to May 9 occurred on May 5 2018. His last flight in a glider prior to May 9 occurred on March 1, 2020 in a Grob G103.

Pilot joined Northern California Soaring Association in December 2019 and had a check flight on December 14, 2019 in a Grob G103. Prior to May 9, 2020, the G103 was the only club glider that he flew.

Pilot's review of his log reveals the following:

Total Time All Aircraft: 2840

Total Time Airplanes: 2733

Total Time Gliders: 107 (395 flights)

Time All Aircraft (last 90 days): 13

Time Airplanes (last 90 days): 9.8

Time Gliders (last 90 days): 3.2 (8 flights)

Date of Last Biennial Flight Review (BFR): December 14, 2019.

Purpose of Flight:

Northern California Soaring Association (NCSA) club checkout in Schweitzer 1-26,

Events Leading Up to the Flight:

Pilot had a restful evening of Friday, May 8, getting about 7 hours of sleep. On May 9, he arose at about 7:45 AM, had breakfast and took a walk with his dogs. He departed his home for Byron Airport at about 9:45 AM, arriving at the Airport at about 10:45 AM. The pilot was scheduled for checkout flights in the 1-26 at 1:00 PM, but a few days earlier at the check pilot's request, it was moved up to approximately 11:00 AM.

Pilot had already reviewed the Schweitzer 1-26 pilot operating handbook at home. Upon arrival at the airport, Pilot completed the NCSA check-out sheet, reviewed the aircraft logs and re-reviewed the pilot operating handbook. He met with an NCSA member and check pilot. Pilot and the check pilot went to the aircraft where check pilot conducted ground instruction. They performed a walk-around and general familiarization with the aircraft. Pilot then performed a pre-flight inspection. He sat in the aircraft to familiarize himself with the aircraft and adjusted the rudder pedals. The check pilot showed Pilot how to maneuver the 1-26 on the ground by himself (with the current social distancing rules). They reviewed controls, airspeeds, handling and takeoff and landing procedures.

During the time between his arrival at the Airport and the first flight, Pilot consumed a protein bar and water. Pilot had a water bottle with him that he took onto the aircraft.

Other than the check pilot, Pilot spoke with ground personnel and the tow pilot.

Flights of May 9, 2020:

First flight:

Pilot requested a tow to 3,500 feet. Tow pilot confirmed and it was agreed that the release point would be over the reservoir in the hills west of the Airport.

There was no written checklist in the aircraft. Pilot performed his own rote pre-takeoff checklist—seat belt/harness fastened; canopy closed and locked; controls checked; spoilers retracted.

The flight was uneventful. Aircraft was towed to 3,500 feet and Pilot released at the planned release point. The flight lasted about 24 minutes. Pilot did not encounter

any thermals but managed to linger at about 1,500 feet for a while. Takeoff and landing were normal and there were no difficulties during the tow.

Second Flight:

Pilot and the tow pilot made the same tow arrangement as the first flight—i.e., release at 3,500 feet over the reservoir.

Pilot performed his own rote pre-takeoff checklist—seat belt/harness fastened; canopy closed and locked; controls checked; spoilers retracted.

Take off was normal. The tow pilot commenced a slight right turn shortly after takeoff. The 1-26's canopy suddenly opened startling Pilot. It started flapping, then crashed down, and then opened again. Pilot had never encountered this in his experience in flying gliders. Pilot attempted to secure the canopy and control his aircraft. He became briefly disoriented. Pilot managed to turn back towards the airport and from the air saw that the tow plane had crashed at the end of the runway.

Pilot did not recall being injured. However, after landing, law enforcement personnel advised him that his right ear was bleeding. Later that evening and for the following 6-7 days, Pilot had pain on the right side of his head. Pilot is still experiencing discomfort.