



AVIATION



HIGHWAY



MARINE



RAILROAD



PIPELINE

# Aviation Investigation Final Report

|                                |  |                         |             |
|--------------------------------|--|-------------------------|-------------|
| <b>Location:</b>               | Williams, California                       | <b>Accident Number:</b> | WPR23LA245  |
| <b>Date &amp; Time:</b>        | June 26, 2023, 16:46 Local                 | <b>Registration:</b>    | N26DX       |
| <b>Aircraft:</b>               | SCHLEICHER ALEXANDER GMBH<br>& CO ASH 26 E | <b>Aircraft Damage:</b> | Substantial |
| <b>Defining Event:</b>         | Loss of lift                               | <b>Injuries:</b>        | 1 None      |
| <b>Flight Conducted Under:</b> | Part 91: General aviation - Personal       |                         |             |

## Analysis

The glider pilot reported that he partially extended the wing spoilers and completed a pre-landing checklist while on left base for his intended destination airport. Shortly after, the glider encountered “significant sinking air” and started a descent. He then maneuvered the glider directly towards the runway and stowed the wing spoilers to extend his glide for a precautionary landing. Subsequently, the glider impacting terrain short of the runway, which resulted in substantial damage to the nose of the glider.

The pilot reported that there were no preaccident mechanical failures or malfunctions with the airplane that would have precluded normal operation.

## Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be:

The pilot’s encounter with atmospheric conditions where the lift was not sufficient to maintain flight, which resulted in a collision with terrain.

## Findings

|                             |   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| <b>Environmental issues</b> | Thermal lifting - Effect on operation   |
| <b>Aircraft</b>             | Altitude - Attain/maintain not possible |
| <b>Environmental issues</b> | Rough terrain - Effect on operation     |

## Factual Information

### History of Flight

|                            |                               |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Approach-VFR pattern final | Loss of lift (Defining event) |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|

### Pilot Information

|                                  |  |  |                  |
|----------------------------------|--|--|------------------|
| <b>Certificate:</b>              | Airline transport; Commercial; Flight engineer; Flight instructor  | <b>Age:</b>                              | 72, Male         |
| <b>Airplane Rating(s):</b>       | Single-engine land; Multi-engine land  | <b>Seat Occupied:</b>                    | Single           |
| <b>Other Aircraft Rating(s):</b> | Glider   | <b>Restraint Used:</b>                   | 4-point          |
| <b>Instrument Rating(s):</b>     | Airplane   | <b>Second Pilot Present:</b>             |                  |
| <b>Instructor Rating(s):</b>     | Airplane multi-engine; Airplane single-engine; Glider; Instrument airplane   | <b>Toxicology Performed:</b>             |                  |
| <b>Medical Certification:</b>    | Class 2 Without waivers/limitations  | <b>Last FAA Medical Exam:</b>            | October 31, 2022 |
| <b>Occupational Pilot:</b>       | No   | <b>Last Flight Review or Equivalent:</b> | January 12, 2023 |
| <b>Flight Time:</b>              | (Estimated) 31000 hours (Total, all aircraft), 122.2 hours (Total, this make and model), 18000 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 23.7 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 12.2 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 4.8 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft) |  |                  |

## Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

|                                      |                                 |                                       |                 |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>Aircraft Make:</b>                | SCHLEICHER ALEXANDER GMBH & CO  | <b>Registration:</b>                  | N26DX           |
| <b>Model/Series:</b>                 | ASH 26 E                        | <b>Aircraft Category:</b>             | Glider          |
| <b>Year of Manufacture:</b>          | 2007                            | <b>Amateur Built:</b>                 |                 |
| <b>Airworthiness Certificate:</b>    | Normal                          | <b>Serial Number:</b>                 | 26242           |
| <b>Landing Gear Type:</b>            | Retractable - Tailwheel         | <b>Seats:</b>                         | 1               |
| <b>Date/Type of Last Inspection:</b> | February 14, 2023 Condition     | <b>Certified Max Gross Wt.:</b>       | 1157 lbs        |
| <b>Time Since Last Inspection:</b>   | 1.5 Hrs                         | <b>Engines:</b>                       | 1 Reciprocating |
| <b>Airframe Total Time:</b>          | 352.2 Hrs as of last inspection | <b>Engine Manufacturer:</b>           | AUSTRO ENGINES  |
| <b>ELT:</b>                          | Not installed                   | <b>Engine Model/Series:</b>           | AE50RAB         |
| <b>Registered Owner:</b>             | On file                         | <b>Rated Power:</b>                   | 50 Horsepower   |
| <b>Operator:</b>                     | On file                         | <b>Operating Certificate(s) Held:</b> | None            |

## Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

|   |                                  |   |                   |
|---|----------------------------------|---|-------------------|
| <b>Conditions at Accident Site:</b>     | Visual (VMC)                     | <b>Condition of Light:</b>                  | Day               |
| <b>Observation Facility, Elevation:</b> | KMYV, 62 ft msl                  | <b>Distance from Accident Site:</b>         | 26 Nautical Miles |
| <b>Observation Time:</b>                | 16:53 Local                      | <b>Direction from Accident Site:</b>        | 98°               |
| <b>Lowest Cloud Condition:</b>          | Clear                            | <b>Visibility</b>                           | 10 miles          |
| <b>Lowest Ceiling:</b>                  | None                             | <b>Visibility (RVR):</b>                    |                   |
| <b>Wind Speed/Gusts:</b>                | /                                | <b>Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:</b>     | None / None       |
| <b>Wind Direction:</b>                  |                                  | <b>Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:</b> | N/A / N/A         |
| <b>Altimeter Setting:</b>               | 29.85 inches Hg                  | <b>Temperature/Dew Point:</b>               | 31°C / 11°C       |
| <b>Precipitation and Obscuration:</b>   | No Obscuration; No Precipitation |   |                   |
| <b>Departure Point:</b>                 | Williams, CA                     | <b>Type of Flight Plan Filed:</b>           | None              |
| <b>Destination:</b>                     | Williams, CA                     | <b>Type of Clearance:</b>                   | None              |
| <b>Departure Time:</b>                  |                                  | <b>Type of Airspace:</b>                    | Class E           |

## Airport Information

|                             |                 |                                  |                           |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>Airport:</b>             | WILLIAMS CN12   | <b>Runway Surface Type:</b>      | Asphalt                   |
| <b>Airport Elevation:</b>   | 68 ft msl       | <b>Runway Surface Condition:</b> | Dry                       |
| <b>Runway Used:</b>         | 16              | <b>IFR Approach:</b>             | None                      |
| <b>Runway Length/Width:</b> | 2000 ft / 20 ft | <b>VFR Approach/Landing:</b>     | Full stop;Traffic pattern |

## Wreckage and Impact Information

|                            |        |                             |                      |
|----------------------------|--------|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| <b>Crew Injuries:</b>      | 1 None | <b>Aircraft Damage:</b>     | Substantial          |
| <b>Passenger Injuries:</b> | N/A    | <b>Aircraft Fire:</b>       | None                 |
| <b>Ground Injuries:</b>    |        | <b>Aircraft Explosion:</b>  | None                 |
| <b>Total Injuries:</b>     | 1 None | <b>Latitude, Longitude:</b> | 39.163502,-122.13164 |

## Administrative Information

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Investigator In Charge (IIC):</b>     | Johnson, Scott  |
| <b>Additional Participating Persons:</b> | Timothy Snyder; Federal Aviation Administration   |
| <b>Original Publish Date:</b>            | November 2, 2023  |
| <b>Last Revision Date:</b>               |   |
| <b>Investigation Class:</b>              | <a href="#">Class 4</a>   |
| <b>Note:</b>                             | The NTSB did not travel to the scene of this accident.  |
| <b>Investigation Docket:</b>             | <a href="https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=192487">https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=192487</a> |

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) is an independent federal agency charged by Congress with investigating every civil aviation accident in the United States and significant events in other modes of transportation—railroad, transit, highway, marine, pipeline, and commercial space. We determine the probable causes of the accidents and events we investigate, and issue safety recommendations aimed at preventing future occurrences. In addition, we conduct transportation safety research studies and offer information and other assistance to family members and survivors for each accident or event we investigate. We also serve as the appellate authority for enforcement actions involving aviation and mariner certificates issued by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and US Coast Guard, and we adjudicate appeals of civil penalty actions taken by the FAA.

The NTSB does not assign fault or blame for an accident or incident; rather, as specified by NTSB regulation, “accident/incident investigations are fact-finding proceedings with no formal issues and no adverse parties ... and are not conducted for the purpose of determining the rights or liabilities of any person” (Title 49 *Code of Federal Regulations* section 831.4). Assignment of fault or legal liability is not relevant to the NTSB’s statutory mission to improve transportation safety by investigating accidents and incidents and issuing safety recommendations. In addition, statutory language prohibits the admission into evidence or use of any part of an NTSB report related to an accident in a civil action for damages resulting from a matter mentioned in the report (Title 49 *United States Code* section 1154(b)). A factual report that may be admissible under 49 *United States Code* section 1154(b) is available [here](#).