



AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

				Reference:	CA18/2/3/8520	
Aircraft Registration	N/A	Date of Accident	19 July 2008		Time of Accident	1015Z
Type of Aircraft	Paraglider		Type of Operation		Private	
Pilot-in-command Licence Type		Paraglider Basic	Age	26	Licence Valid	Yes
Pilot-in-command Flying Experience		Total Flying Hours	16.0		Hours on Type	10.0
Last point of departure		Bambi Flying Site, near Lydenburg				
Next point of intended landing		Bambi Flying Site, near Lydenburg				
Location of the accident site with reference to easily defined geographical points (GPS readings if possible)						
Bambi Flying Site, near Lydenburg (GPS Position: South 25° 29.25 East 030° 18.01)						
Meteorological Information		Surface wind; NNE/5 to 10 knots, Temperature; 21°C, Cloud cover; Nil				
Number of people on board	1 + 0	No. of people injured	0	No. of people killed	1	
Synopsis						
<p>The pilot was a licensed paraglider pilot, who had actively participated in the sport of paragliding for the past 18 months. She had logged about 80 flights in total, of which approximately 30 flights were from the Bambi Flying site, located near Lydenburg.</p> <p>After launching in near-perfect weather conditions, she continued to fly for approximately 30 minutes. During the descent for landing at a height of approximately 100m (330 feet) above ground level, it would appear that she encountered turbulence, which caused the starboard wing section to partially collapse, with no visible pilot input to recover from the condition. The paraglider started to spin to the right. The wing went into an unrecoverable condition with no attempt by the pilot to deploy her reserve safety parachute, and she crashed to the ground. The pilot was fatally injured.</p>						
Probable Cause						
<p>The paraglider pilot encountering turbulence during her approach for landing, lost control of her craft and without initiating any recovery action at any given time including deploying her reserve safety parachute, crashed to the ground, with fatal consequences.</p>						
IARC Date		Jacques		Release Date		



AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT REPORT

Name of Owner/Operator : T.J. Fisher
Manufacturer : Advance Thun AG
Model : Epsilon 4-26
Nationality : South African
Registration Marks : Not Applicable
Place : Bambi Flying Site near Lydenburg
Date : 19 July 2008
Time : 1015Z

All times given in this report are Co-ordinated Universal Time (UTC) and will be denoted by (Z). South African Standard Time is UTC plus 2 hours.

Purpose of the Investigation:

*In terms of Regulation 12.03.1 of the Civil Aviation Regulations (1997) this report was produced in the interest of the promotion of aviation safety and the reduction of the risk of aviation accidents or incidents and **not to establish legal liability.***

Disclaimer:

This report is given without prejudice to the rights of the CAA, which are reserved.

1. FACTUAL INFORMATION

1.1 History of Flight:

1.1.1 The pilot was a licensed paraglider pilot, who had actively participated in the sport of paragliding for the past 18 months. She had logged about 80 flights in total at the time, of which approximately 30 flights were from the Bambi Flying site, located near Lydenburg.

1.1.2 After launching in near-perfect weather conditions, she continued to fly for approximately 30 minutes. During the descent for landing at a height of approximately 100m (330 feet) above ground level it would appear that she encountered turbulence, which caused the starboard wing section to partially collapse, with no visible pilot input to recover from the condition. The paraglider started to spin to the right. The wing went into an unrecoverable condition with no attempt by the pilot to deploy her reserve safety parachute, and she crashed to the ground. The pilot was fatally injured.

1.1.3 The accident occurred during daylight condition at a geographical position that was determined to be South 25° 29.25 East 030° 18.01, near Lydenburg in Mpumalanga.

1.2 Injuries to Persons:

Injuries	Pilot	Crew	Pass.	Other
Fatal	1	-	-	-
Serious	-	-	-	-
Minor	-	-	-	-
None	-	-	-	-

1.3 Damage to Aircraft:

1.3.1 Damage was limited to line burns that occurred due to the collapse and re-inflation during the occurrence.

1.4 Other Damage:

1.4.1 There was no other damage caused.

1.5 Personnel Information:

Nationality	South African	Gender	Female	Age	26
Licence Type	Paraglider Basic				
Licence valid	Yes	Type Endorsed	N/A		
Ratings	N/A				
Medical Expiry Date	N/A				
Restrictions	None				
Previous Accidents	None				

Following a telephonic interview with the late pilot's boyfriend, who was also a paraglider pilot and was present on the day of the accident, she was in good health and had approximately 80 flights to her credit when the accident occurred. They had been flying together from the start, and she had done approximately 30 flights from the Bambi Flying site prior to the accident flight. Most of her training and initial flying was conducted at coastal sites. Her flying equipment, including the wing, helmet, harness and emergency reserve parachute was of good quality.

Flying Experience:

Total Hours	16.0
Total Past 90 Days	5.0
Total on Type Past 90 Days	5.0
Total on Type	10.0

1.6 Aircraft Information:

Type	Advance Epsilon 4-26	
Serial Number	921P-27723	
Manufacturer	Advance Thun AG	
Year of Manufacture	2006	
Total Airframe Hours (At time of Accident)	26.0	
Last MPI (Date & Hours)	N/A	N/A
Hours since Last MPI	N/A	
Operating Categories	Paraglider	

1.7 Meteorological Information:

1.7.1 Weather information was obtained from people at the accident site.

Wind direction	NNE	Wind speed	5-10kts	Visibility	>10km
Temperature	21°C	Cloud cover	Nil	Cloud base	Nil
Dew point	Unknown				

1.8 Aids to Navigation:

1.8.1 The pilot was not utilizing any navigational aids at the time of the accident.

1.9 Communications:

1.9.1 The pilot carried a shoulder-mounted radio, which was equipped with ear pieces during the flight. According to the late pilot's boyfriend, who was also a paraglider pilot and was waiting for her on the ground, they communicated several times during her flight. At no time did she report any problem or discomfort with the flight and the conditions. Although she was wearing a helmet, communication was clear and audible at all times. He could not recall that she broadcasted any distress messages following the partial collapse of the starboard canopy.

1.10 Aerodrome Information:

1.10.1 The accident did not occur at an aerodrome.

1.11 Flight Recorders:

1.11.1 The pilot had a digital Variometer with her during the flight, which contains a non-volatile memory. The information that was downloaded from the unit, which was recovered from the accident site, indicated the final phase of the descent rate prior to impact being 13.9 m/s (\pm 50km/h).

1.12 Wreckage and Impact Information:

1.12.1 The pilot impacted the ground at a substantial rate of descent and came to rest basically at the point of impact.

1.13 Medical and Pathological Information:

1.13.1 The pilot suffered injuries to her skull as well as internal organs. The cause of death was multiple injuries sustained during impact.

1.14 Fire:

1.14.1 There was no pre- or post-impact fire.

1.15 Survival Aspects:

1.15.1 This was not considered to be a survivable accident, due to the high descent rate and associated impact with the ground.

1.16 Tests and Research:

1.16.1 None considered necessary.

1.17 Organisational and Management Information:

1.17.1 This was a private flight, with the pilot also being the owner of the paraglider.

1.18 Additional Information:

1.18.1 None.

1.19 Useful or Effective Investigation Techniques:

1.19.1 None.

2. ANALYSIS

- 2.1 During the landing approach, the pilot most probably encountered thermic turbulent air, which caused a collapse of the starboard portion of the wing (non-rigid) which then caused a rotation clockwise approximately 360°, resulting in line twists, re-inflating and diving past the pilot.
- 2.2 The pilot then probably became disorientated and lacking experience in unusual flight attitudes, failed to take the necessary timeous corrective measures.
- 2.3 The wing then got rapidly further out of control, causing the pilot to plummet vertically past the wing which then re-inflated out of control and with the whole process repeated itself twice until the wing impacted the ground, followed by the pilot.
- 2.4 Upon impact in a right side-face-forward position, the pilot suffered severe and immediate fatal injuries to the head, neck and spine.

3. CONCLUSION

a) Findings:

- (i) No defect or malfunction was detected with the equipment or the reserve safety parachute.
- (ii) The reserve safety parachute was not deployed.
- (iii) During the duration of the flight, good meteorological conditions prevailed.
- (iv) The pilot had no current or previous medical history that could have impaired her performance to deal with the situation.
- (v) The pilot had undergone the required training and had a valid paragliding

licence. Pilot.

(vi) The flying equipment, including the wing, helmet, harness and emergency reserve parachute was of good quality.

(vii) The flying site was of an acceptable standard for the licence grade held.

b) Probable Cause/s:

(i) The pilot, encountering turbulence during her approach for landing, lost control of her craft and without initiating any recovery action at the appropriate time, including deploying her emergency reserve parachute, crashed to the ground, causing fatal injuries.

c) Contributory Cause/s:

(i) Lack of experience by the pilot to timeously identify and initiate the appropriate corrective action to recover from the unusual condition.

(ii) Failure to timeously deploy her emergency reserve parachute.

4. SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 It is recommended to the Aero Club of South Africa and SAHPA (South African Hang & Paragliding Association) that training standards need to be amended to include the simulated deployment of emergency reserve parachute/s during basic training rather than advance training.

It is further recommended that;

a. All paraglider pilots should carry emergency reserve parachutes, irrespective of the safety level of wing or experience level.

b. Simulated emergency deployment and repacking of reserves should be undertaken annually. Should the reserve parachute have been exposed to

harsh environmental conditions which might question the integrity of the equipment, such as rain, very damp conditions or insects, the onus should be on the pilot to have it inspected, repacked and properly documented.

- c. Instructors should always emphasize the dangers of the sport and inform prospective students accordingly.
- d. It is of primary importance that greater emphasis be placed on the recognition of unusual flight attitudes and the recovery thereof during basic training.

5. APPENDICES

- 5.1 There are no appendices to this report.

-END-

Report reviewed and amended by Advisory Safety Panel

27 January 2009