

**Aviation Safety Investigation Report
198802418**

Sportavia Sperber RF5 Motor Glider

28 December 1988

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Investigations commenced on or before 30 June 2003, including the publication of reports as a result of those investigations, are authorised by the CEO of the Bureau in accordance with Part 2A of the Air Navigation Act 1920.

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NOTE: All air safety occurrences reported to the ATSB are categorised and recorded. For a detailed explanation on Category definitions please refer to the ATSB website at www.atsb.gov.au.

This accident was not subject to an on site investigation.

Occurrence Number: 198802418
Location: Bunyan NSW
Date: 28 December 1988
Highest Injury Level: Nil
Injuries:

Occurrence Type: Accident
Time: 1010

	Fatal	Serious	Minor	None
Crew	0	0	1	1
Ground	0	0	0	-
Passenger	0	0	0	1
Total	0	0	0	2

Aircraft Details: Sportavia Sperber RF5
 Motor Glider
Registration: VH-GGJ
Serial Number: 5121
Operation Type: Private
Damage Level: Substantial
Departure Point: Bunyan NSW
Departure Time: 1005
Destination: Cootamundra NSW

Approved for Release: 20 February 1989

Circumstances:

While performing the pre-flight inspection, the pilot carried out an engine run to check the engine performance. At the completion of the run he allowed the engine to idle for several minutes, during which time it suffered from carburettor icing and stopped. The pilot, having satisfied himself that it was only ice which caused the problem, prepared for DEPARTURE. Both he and his passenger embarked and he taxyed the aircraft for approximately 6 minutes to the threshold of the into wind runway. He then spent a further 2 minutes completing the pre-takeoff checks. The takeoff and climb were sluggish and after climbing to 150 ft AGL the pilot retracted the landing gear. He turned onto a downwind heading, and at 250 ft AGL reduced the engine power from the take-off setting. The engine then commenced to surge and lose power. As there was sufficient height available he decided to glide back for a landing on the DEPARTURE runway. During the approach he continued trying to locate the reason for the engine malfunction, then at about 60 ft AGL he lowered the gear and stopped the engine. As he commenced the round out for landing the pilot became unsure as to whether the gear had been correctly locked down, and became distracted checking the lever position. He inadvertently moved the control stick rearwards, causing the glider to balloon, lose airspeed and stall. A heavy landing ensued. The engine malfunction was probably the result of carburettor icing. The engine was not equipped with any method for preventing or removing ice, and conditions on the particular day were such that icing could be expected at any power setting.

Significant Factors:

The following factors were considered relevant to the development of the accident

1. Atmospheric conditions favourable for the development of carburettor icing, against which the engine had no protection.
2. Engine malfunction at an early stage of the flight.
3. The pilot became distracted from flying the aircraft while verifying the landing gear lever position.
5. The pilot mishandled the controls during the landing flare.