

## BRS Save #158



Here's the straight scoop on the Dragonfly incident and BRS deployment.

I had [hang glider pilot] Tim Denton on tow, one of several tows we had already performed that day at the Farm, and we had gotten to about 1,100 feet.

After circling in some elusive lift I had leveled the wings and headed up wind. Suddenly, I heard a loud crack and the engine began to vibrate violently. At the same time, the aircraft began an uncontrollable diving spin to the left. I did not know what happened but recognized it as a catastrophic failure of some sort and immediately fired the BRS.

Tim had already released and was heading to a safe landing. Unfortunately, I did not think well enough to get the engine throttled back and shut down first, but the chute fired correctly and did not tangle with the prop. Throughout the rest of the descent, I tried unsuccessfully to stop the engine. The descent did not last more than 10 -15 seconds and the plane was spinning violently under the canopy. I knew I was going to hit hard, but nothing I did changed anything. I was propelled into the cornfield as though fired out of a slingshot. The cockpit and left wing tip seemed to hit simultaneously. No bounce or anything, just a big lawn dart with the tail sticking vertically up out of the 6 foot high corn.

When I realized that I had survived the impact, I became aware of the engine still running and gasoline pouring all over me. At that point I became afraid for my life all over again. Quickly, I realized the control panel, although detached and smashed, lay in arm's reach. I reached out and messed with the switch and the engine stopped. Again, a sigh of relief.

Then, I evaluated my physical condition and realized I was not hurt too badly. It took a little maneuvering, but I was able to get out of my helmet, gloves and seat belt. When I stood up and started walking away, I realized I was OK.

Thanks to everyone there who showed concern, compassion and help. Thanks to Dave Niemeyer for driving me home.

What happened? Apparently a broken aileron control tube that then went through the prop.

Thanks to BRS for saving my life.

Alan Brown  
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