

ACCIDENT

Involving the motorised glider registered D-KBSJ

Event:	Collision with terrain.
Probable cause:	Dissymmetrical stall at low altitude.

Consequences and damage:	Pilot killed, glider destroyed.
Type of aircraft:	Glaser–Dirks DG 600 M motorised glider.
Date and time:	Tuesday 21 March 2000, in the afternoon.
Owner:	Private.
Place:	Avrieux, Pelouse Pass (73), altitude 2798 metres.
Type of flight:	Travel.
Persons on board:	Pilot.
Licenses and experience:	Pilot, 43, VV issued by Germany in 1977, 1500 flying hours of which 10 in the previous 3 days.
Meteorological conditions:	Estimated at the site: wind 180°/10 to 15 kt, CAVOK.

Circumstances

The pilot took off at about midday from Sisteron for a flight around Mont Blanc, accompanied by another plane. At about 15 h 30, the pilot of the other glider turned back as he was not finding enough updraughts. The pilot of D-KBSJ continued his flight towards the north.

The wreck of the glider was found on the north-facing slope of the Pelouse Pass (downwind) at about 40 m from the summit. The spread of the wreckage showed that the glider had struck the terrain at a steep angle (almost vertical) on a left turn.

It was not possible to determine the glider's precise track but witnesses said they heard the pilot on the radio at about 15 h 00 vertically above a reporting point east of the accident site.

The crest line at the site of the accident runs southwest/northeast. When the wind is from the south, downdraughts are created under the terrain winds. These conditions can change with the wind direction, the amount of sunshine and the time of day.

It is likely that while passing or trying to pass over the Pass with insufficient height, the glider may have been forced down towards the rock face. The pilot may have pulled back on the stick and the glider stalled near the terrain.

Regaining control of a DG 600 after a stall requires a height of about 50 metres. A stall on this type of aircraft is typified by sudden drop.

The disappearance of the glider was notified two days after the accident. Extensive search and rescue operations were launched, but the wreckage was only found on 25 March 2000. The ELT was found near the wreckage but the switch was in the off position. Tests showed that it was in working order.



