

ACCIDENT

involving the glider registered D-1179

Event:	Mid-air collision with a hang-glider.
Probable cause:	Flying in an area frequently used by hang-gliders, failure to detect the aircraft in question.

Consequences and damage: Glider: leading edge and underside of left wing slightly damaged.

Hang-glider: destroyed.

Type of aircraft: Rolladen Schneider LS 6 C glider.

Aile Tecma F1 Tempo hang-glider.

Date and time: Thursday 18 July 2002 at 13 h 35.

Owner: Club.

Place: Laragne-Montéglin (05), Châbre Mountain.

Type of flight: Training.

Persons on board: Glider: pilot.

Hang-glider: pilot.

Licenses and experience: Pilot, aged 59, glider pilot's license issued in 1986 in Germany, 940 flying hours of which 80 on type and 17 in the three previous months.

Meteorological conditions: Estimated at the site of the accident: wind 330°/10 kt, CAVOK.

Circumstances

After having taken off at around 13 h 00 from the Serres aerodrome, the pilot of glider D-1179 joined three other gliders for a training session on slope flying. The flight took place in the area of the Châbre Mountain, around ten kilometres south-west of Serres. The pilot took the second position behind the glider instructor. The four gliders then proceeded in a column to the training area. Entering the area at an altitude of 1,200 metres, the four gliders set themselves up for slope flying along the north side of the Châbre Mountain. They went round an area where hang-gliders take off then took advantage of an updraft by spiraling. At about 1,800 metres the instructor spotted a hang-glider within the same updraft and flying in the same direction as the gliders, though slightly lower. He immediately signaled the hang-glider's presence to the other three pilots. At that moment, he noticed the presence of other hang-gliders above his glider. He then

decided to leave the area with the three gliders. While he was still banking left in the updraft, the second glider's left wing caught the upper centre mast of the hang-glider the instructor had pointed out. The hang glider immediately came apart. Its pilot managed with some difficulty to get out and use his emergency parachute and land. The glider pilot landed at Serres aerodrome with no further problems.

The glider pilot explained that he hadn't seen the hang-glider.

The site is in class G airspace. Any pilot flying in this airspace is subject to the rules of the air and visual flight rules (see and avoid).

The valleys of the Durance and the Buech are surrounded by high ground where the aerology is particularly favorable to gliding and free flight. Several clubs or instruction centres are located there and carry out their activities throughout the year at numerous sites. The sites used by the hang-gliders are known to glider pilots. Free flight competitions are organised there periodically. They are subject to the organisers working with the departmental prefecture which gives its agreement after having obtained the technical opinion of the aeronautical district.

The Châbre Mountain is the subject of an agreement between the commune of Laragne-Montéglin, the National Forestry Office, the Minister of Youth and Sport and the FFVV (French Gliding Federation). This agreement allows hang-glider pilots to use adapted sites from which they can take off and undertake free flights.

The set up and the activities of these sites are not subject to information from the civil aviation authorities.

Preliminary contact between users of the same category of airspace of this type could reduce the number of collisions.

The BEA published a study on mid-air collisions in 2001.