

## Accident to the ROLLADEN SCHNEIDER - LS8 – A registered HB-3297

on 16 July 2019

at Thorame-Basse (Alpes-de-Haute-Provence)

<sup>(1)</sup> Unless otherwise stated, all times given in this report are in local time.

<b>Time</b>	Around 15:35 <sup>(1)</sup>
<b>Operator</b>	Club
<b>Type of flight</b>	Local flight
<b>Persons on board</b>	Pilot
<b>Consequences and damage</b>	Pilot injured, glider slightly damaged
<b>This is a courtesy translation by the BEA of the Final Report on the Safety Investigation published in May 2020. As accurate as the translation may be, the original text in French is the work of reference.</b>	

### Forced landing on a mountainside

#### 1 - HISTORY OF THE FLIGHT

*Note: the following information is based mainly on the pilot's statement and the glider's FLARM data.*

The pilot made a towed take-off from Vinon aerodrome (Var) at about 13:00. He headed for Puimoisson (Alpes-de-Haute-Provence) aerodrome, Digne-les-Bains (Alpes-de-Haute-Provence), then Blayeul mountain, and finally Cheval Blanc mountain, which he reached at about 15:28 at an altitude of about 2,400 m.

After making use of the uplift, he flew along the ridge of the Cheval Blanc mountain in a northerly direction and then headed towards the summit of Coste Longue mountain ②, where he turned around at an altitude of about 2,300 m. He then followed the ridge on the southern slope of Cheval Blanc mountain in a westerly direction. The glider was losing altitude as the terrain got higher. The pilot circled a summit and then the glider passed below the ridge. The pilot made a forced landing on the side of the mountain ③ at an altitude of 2,135 m.

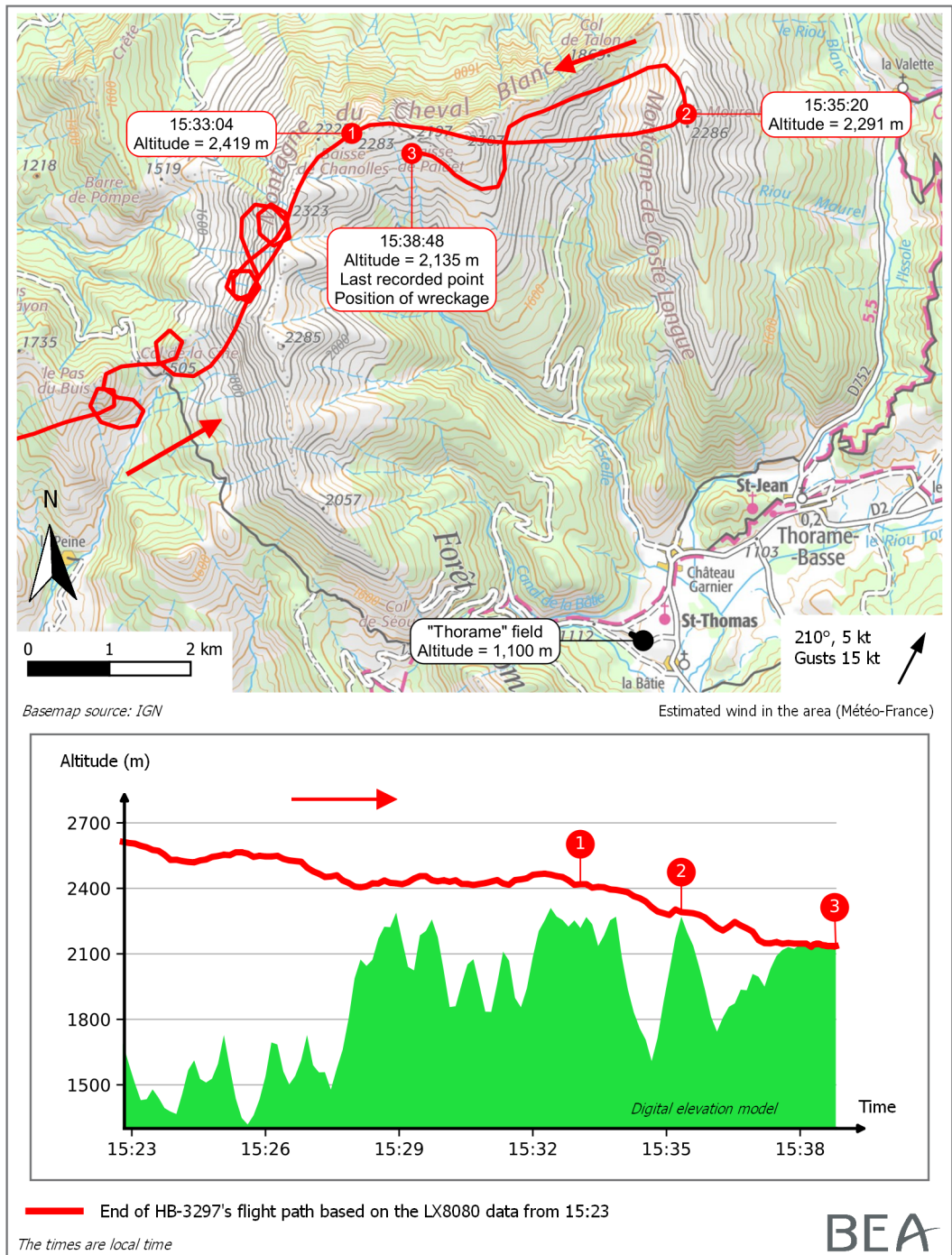


Figure 1: flight path

## 2 - ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

### 2.1 Meteorological information

The meteorological conditions estimated at the accident site by Météo-France were as follows: wind 210°, 5 knots, with gusts up to 15kt, visibility greater than 10 km, a few small cumulus with the cloud base at an altitude of 3,000 m, moderate to fairly strong turbulence.

## 2.2 Accident site

The glider was located on the southern slope of Cheval Blanc mountain, about 60 m below Baisse de Paluet, located at an altitude of 2,197 m. It was pointing in a north-westerly direction.



Figure 2: photo of the site

## 2.3 Read-out of recorded data

The glider was equipped with an LX8080 computer with a FLARM module that records GNSS tracks<sup>(2)</sup>. The data recorded by the computer were used to reconstruct the flight path in figure 1.

## 2.4 “Thorame” field

The “*Thorame*” field which is listed in the Guide des Aires de Sécurité dans les Alpes [Safe Landing Area Guide for the Alps] as suitable for a forced landing is located in the valley south of Cheval Blanc mountain, approximately six kilometres from the accident site (see Figure 1).

## 2.5 Pilot information

The pilot, who held a glider pilot licence issued by the Swiss authorities, had logged 860 flight hours, including fewer than 200 hours on type. Since 2009, he had regularly attended training courses at Vinon aerodrome organised by his club based in Switzerland. The course he was attending at the time of the accident had started on 12 July.

## 2.6 Pilot’s report<sup>(3)</sup>

The pilot had attended the morning briefing conducted by the chief pilot at Vinon. He indicated that, after flying over Cheval Blanc mountain, he turned around and the glider then suddenly lost altitude. He stated that it was not possible to turn towards the valley because of the risk of stalling and that he was forced to land on the side of the mountain. He was familiar with the “*Thorame*” field.

<sup>(2)</sup> Global Navigation Satellite System, incorporating various systems with international coverage, including the American GPS.

<sup>(3)</sup> Due to the pilot’s medical condition, it was not possible to obtain a statement in the days following the accident. The pilot subsequently provided a report, but did not wish to answer the investigators’ questions.

### 3 - CONCLUSIONS

*The conclusions are solely based on the information which came to the knowledge of the BEA during the investigation. They are not intended to apportion blame or liability.*

The pilot flew along the ridge on the south side of Cheval Blanc mountain in a westerly direction. He circled a 2,307-m peak that was on his flight path. At the end of this manoeuvre, the glider was below the level of the ridge at a low height in respect of the slope. The pilot nevertheless continued in the direction of Baisse de Paluet. When he realized that he would not be able to clear the terrain ahead of him, he felt that he could no longer turn safely towards the valley and made a forced landing on the side of the mountain.

The pilot's decision to continue the flight in unfavourable conditions forced him to land on an unsuitable surface.