



Accident to the SCHEMPP HIRTH - JANUS C
registered **F-CLUI**
on Monday 23 October 2023
at Bagnères-de-Luchon

Time	Around 14:30 ¹
Operator	Aéroclub Aire sur Adour
Type of flight	Instruction
Persons on board	Instructor, student pilot
Consequences and damage	Glider substantially damaged

This is a courtesy translation by the BEA of the Final Report on the Safety Investigation. As accurate as the translation may be, the original text in French is the work of reference.

Long landing, runway overrun, ground loop, in instruction

1 HISTORY OF THE FLIGHT

Note: the following information is principally based on statements and data from the Open Glider Network (OGN) and the glider's FLARM.

The instructor, accompanied by a student pilot, carried out a winch take-off from Bagnères-de-Luchon aerodrome for an instruction flight. A few minutes after taking off, he considered that the aerological conditions were not suitable for an instruction flight and decided to terminate the flight.

He joined the end of the downwind leg for runway 01². He configured the glider for landing. The approach seemed stabilized to him with a speed of around 115 km/h for an aiming point at the runway threshold. When flaring, the instructor was surprised that he was unable to absorb the speed and land. The glider flew over the runway at one metre from the ground before bouncing mid-runway. On arriving at the end of the runway, the instructor pitched up to avoid the perimeter fence and then banked the glider to the RH side. The glider touched down and then performed a ground loop before coming to a stop perpendicular to the runway. The fuselage broke.

¹ Except where otherwise indicated, the times in this report are in local time.

² Unpaved runway measuring 750 m x 50 m.

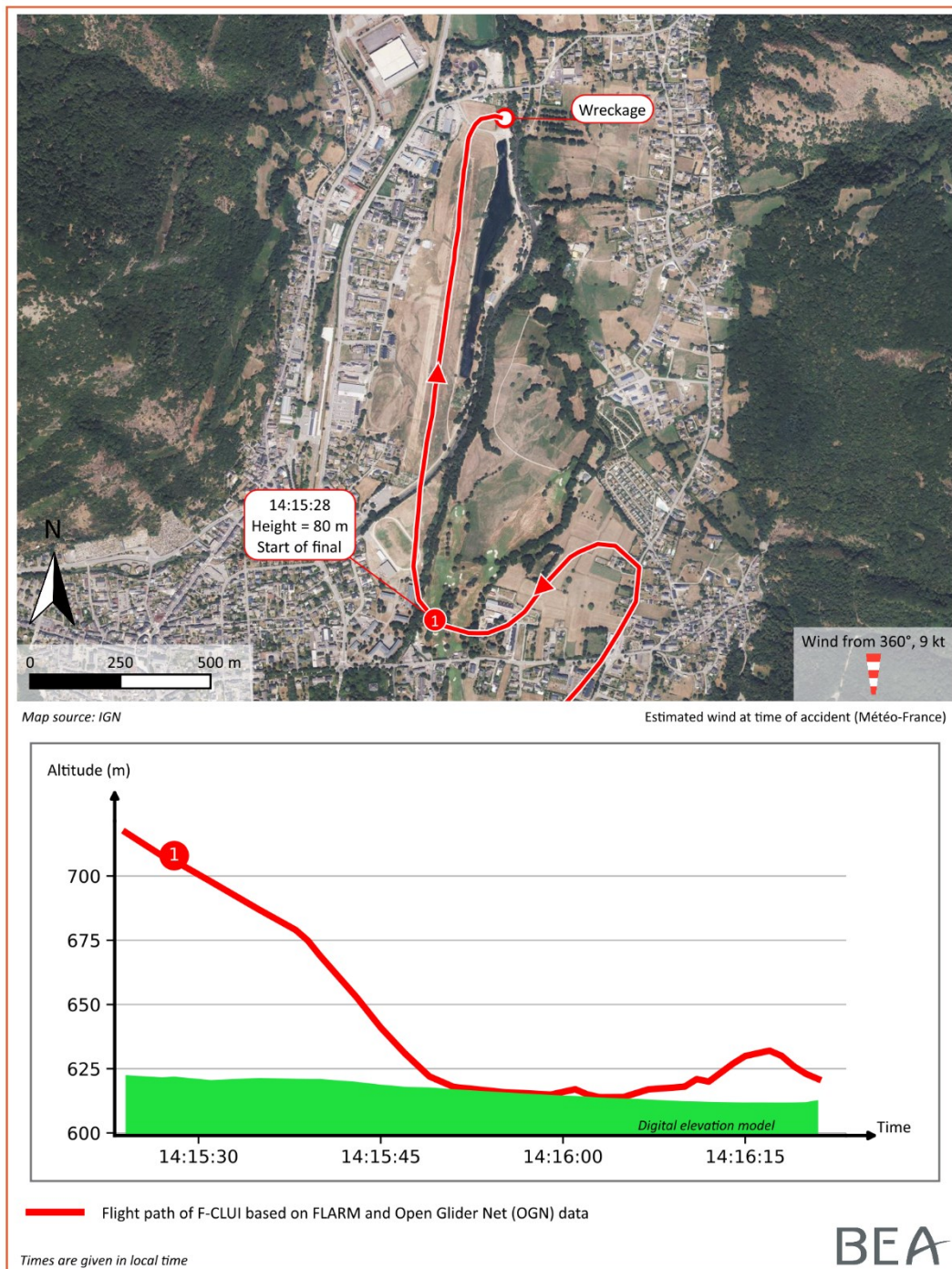


Figure 1: flight path of F-CLUI

2 ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

2.1 Site and wreckage

The glider came to a stop in the field situated on the axis of runway 01 at approximately 130 m from the runway end and 40 m to the right of the runway axis.

The damage was caused by the impact.

After the accident, the airbrakes were found retracted and unlocked. Not being locked, the airbrakes moved freely.

The wing flaps were found in the 0° configuration, the flap control was in the corresponding detent.

The field situated on the axis of runway 01 was 60 m long. Buildings were situated at the end of the field.

2.2 Glider information

The Janus C is a high-performance, twin-seat glider equipped with wing flaps.

The airbrake control is located on the LH side of the cockpit, pointing downwards. When it is in its forward position, the airbrakes are retracted and locked. When it is pulled by around four centimetres, the airbrakes are unlocked. Beyond this distance, the airbrakes are extended according to the position of the control. There is no detent. The feedback provided by the French glider federation (FFVP) during the investigation indicated that on this type of glider, if the handle is not held in position, the airbrakes can move slowly towards the retracted position.

The flap control is positioned above the airbrake control, and points upwards. There are five detents³ for the five configurations: landing, +8°, 0°, -4° and -7°. When the control is in its forward position, the flaps are in the landing configuration.

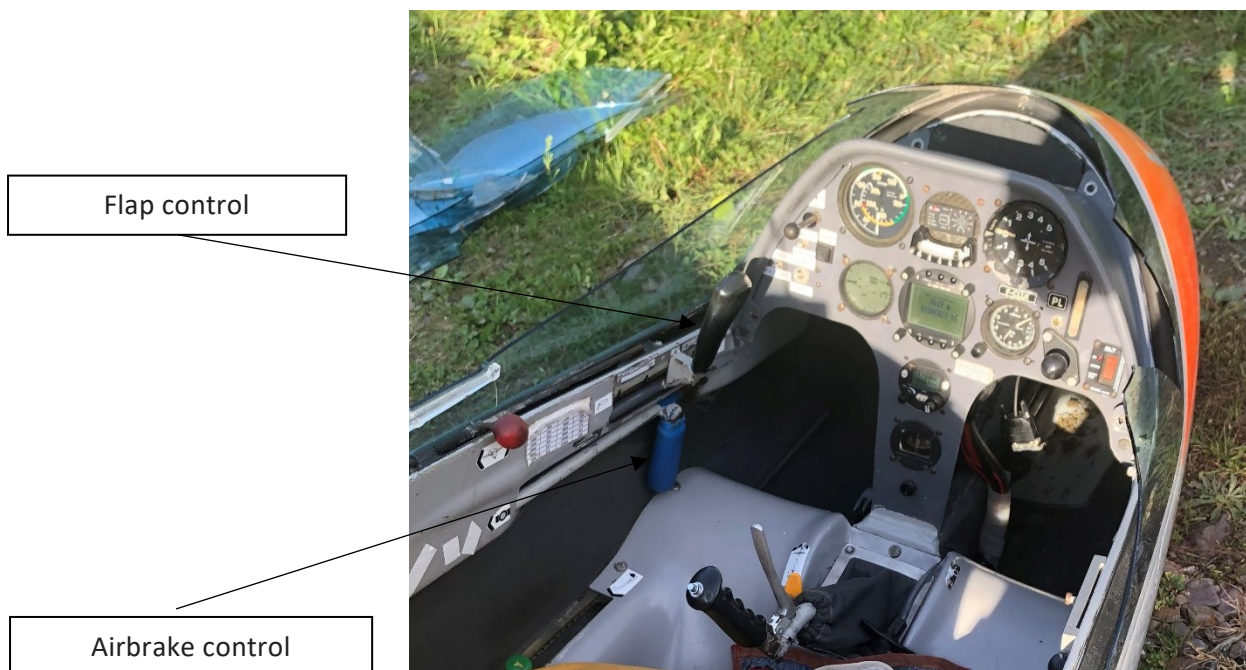


Figure 2: photo of forward cockpit

2.3 Meteorological information

The meteorological conditions estimated by Météo-France at the time of the accident were the following: wind from 360° of 9 kt with gusts up to 20 kt, visibility greater than 10 km, a few altocumulus at 10,000 ft, temperature of 17°C and light to moderate turbulence.

³ The detents take the form of small notches in the wall.

2.4 Read-out of recorded data

The ground speed was estimated based on the data from the OGN and the glider's FLARM. A steady increase in speed was observed during the final approach, up to a maximum speed of around 130 km/h during the flare. The presence of gusts means that it is not possible to accurately determine the glider's air speed during this flight phase; if we take a mean speed of 9 kt for a wind from 360°, we can estimate that the air speed reached 145 km/h during the flare.

2.5 Pilot information

The 65-year-old instructor held a Sailplane Pilot Licence (SPL) obtained in 1980 along with an instructor rating obtained in 1985. He had logged approximately 9,300 flight hours including around 1,000 hours on the Janus.

The student pilot had logged around 15 flight hours.

2.6 Statement

The instructor indicated that he had chosen an approach speed of 115 km/h due to the wind. He specified that he extended the air brakes to halfway in the base leg and visually checked that they were extended before the last turn. He then extended the flaps to the specified landing configuration. He thought afterwards that he had very probably kept his hand on the flap control for all of the final approach without realising that he had forgotten to put his hand back on the airbrake control. He added that the final approach was stabilised both in terms of the path and speed and that nothing had alerted him to the fact that the airbrakes had retracted. He thought afterwards that the airbrakes had retracted progressively or during the flare. During the landing, he was focused on piloting and did not think to check that the airbrakes were actually extended.

When he did not manage to land, he first thought that he was experiencing the effect of a tailwind gust. He slightly pushed the stick forward and the glider bounced. The glider flew over the runway and rapidly arrived at its end. The instructor indicated that he understood that he could not stop the glider before the fence situated at the end of the runway and kept the glider in flight to avoid it. He then turned slightly to cause a ground loop and quickly stop the glider as the field was too short for landing, with obstacles at the end of it.

3 CONCLUSIONS

The conclusions are solely based on the information which came to the knowledge of the BEA during the investigation.

Scenario

The instructor terminated the flight shortly after taking off as he believed that the conditions were not suitable for an instruction flight. During the final approach, after positioning the flaps in the landing configuration, he very probably kept his hand on the flap control instead of returning it to the airbrake control. The airbrakes, half open in the base leg, very probably retracted without the instructor realising this. During the flare, the instructor was unable to land. The glider bounced and flew over the length of the runway. After passing over the fence at the end of the runway, the instructor banked the glider so that the right wing would touch the ground and the glider would make a ground loop in order to stop before the obstacles.

Safety lessons

In 2015, the FFVP published an article entitled "[La confusion des commandes, comment s'en protéger](#)" discussing how controls may be confused and how to avoid this.

The BEA investigations are conducted with the sole objective of improving aviation safety and are not intended to apportion blame or liabilities.