



Accident to the Beechcraft 18 - C18S
registered **HB-GAC**
and to the Robin DR400-120
registered **F-GPHL**
on 21 May 2022
at Béziers-Vias

Time	Around 13:15 ¹
Operator	HB-GAC: Private F-GPHL: Aéroclub du Gard
Type of flight	Cross-country
Persons on board	HB-GAC: Pilot F-GPHL: Instructor, student pilot and passenger
Consequences and damage	DR400 destroyed
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.	

Collision between aeroplane taxiing and aeroplane at holding point

1 HISTORY OF THE FLIGHT

Note: the following information is principally based on statements and radio-communication recordings.

After a stopover of approximately one hour at Béziers-Vias airport to refuel and rest, the pilot of HB-GAC started up both engines for a flight bound for Birrfeld airport (Switzerland) where the aeroplane was based. He then performed the run-up and the before-flight actions on the parking area.

Meanwhile, the pilot of the DR400 registered F-GBHJ, asked for taxiing instructions. The controller instructed him to taxi to holding point A. Approximately three minutes later, the pilot of the DR400 registered F-GPHL requested taxiing instructions. The controller instructed him to taxi to holding point A as well. The pilot of F-GBHJ then announced that he was ready at holding point A. The controller cleared him to line up and take off on runway 09.

Approximately one minute later, the pilot of HB-GAC requested taxiing instructions². The controller instructed him to taxi to holding point A. F-GPHL was now on taxiway A, taxiing to the holding point. F-GBUJ was on runway 09.

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

² All the communications between the pilot of HB-GAC and the controller were in English. The communications between the pilots of the two other aeroplanes and the controller were in French.

The pilot of HB-GAC left the parking area, taxied and turned onto taxiway A. Meanwhile, the pilot of F-GPHL announced that he was ready at holding point A. The controller asked him to hold at holding point A. The pilot of HB-GAC then saw a DR400 take off. As he reached the holding point, he collided with the DR400, registered F-GPHL. The propeller of the right engine severed the rear of the DR400, which was thrown to the right on impact.

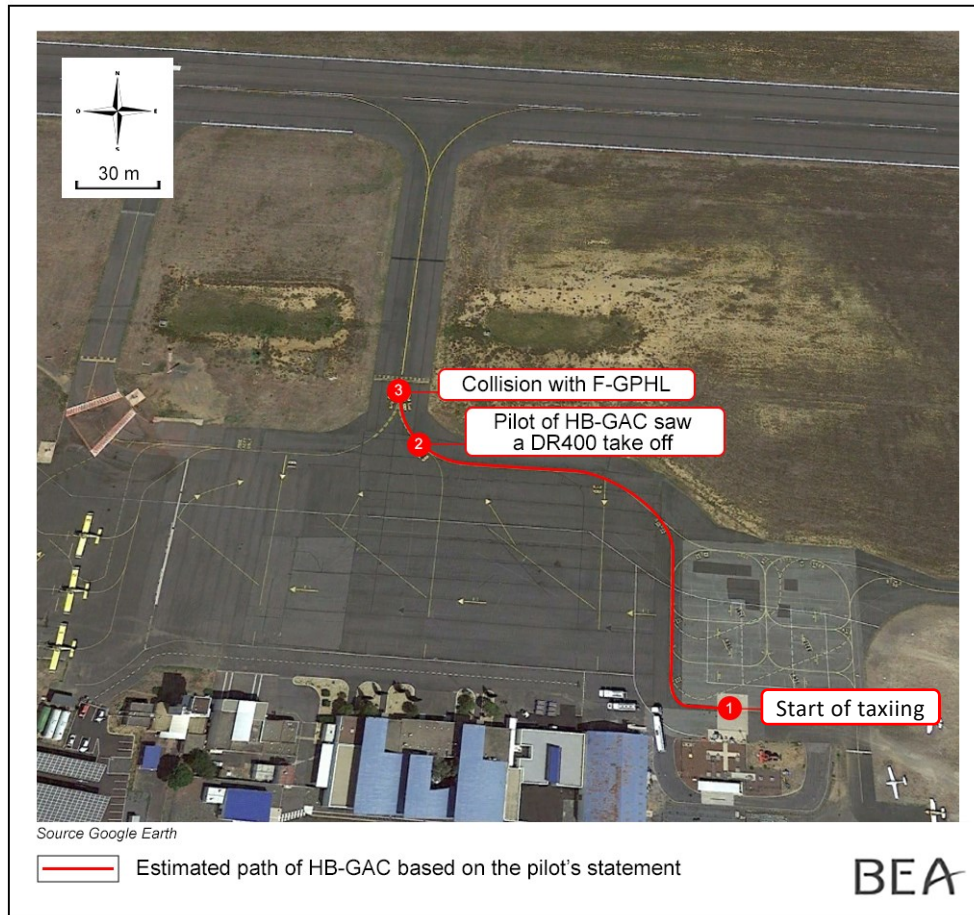


Figure 1: path of HB-GAC when taxiing



Figure 2: damage to F-GPHL (source: pilot of HB-GAC)

2 ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

2.1 Aerodrome information

Béziers-Vias airport is a controlled airport, reserved for radio-equipped aircraft. It has a paved runway 09-27 with a length of 2,000 m. Three taxiways (P, A and B) located south of the runway lead to the middle of the runway. Taxiway P is reserved for Civil Protection aeroplanes, and taxiway B for aircraft with a maximum take-off weight of less than 5.7 t.

2.2 Pilot of HB-GAC information

The 64-year-old pilot, a Swiss national, held a PPL(A) private pilot licence issued in 1978. He had logged 3,637 flight hours, 60 hours of which on type. He was not fluent in French.

2.3 Aeroplane information

The Beech 18 registered HB-GAC, is a twin-engine aeroplane with conventional landing gear. The pilot was the co-owner. Due to the high nose-up angle of the fuselage with respect to the ground, the front of the fuselage screens part of the pilot's view forward. It is therefore common practice to zigzag in order to see forward by looking out of the side windows.



Figure 3: HB-GAC (source: jetphotos.com)

F-GPHL is a DR400-120 belonging to *Aéroclub du Gard*. F-GBUJ is a DR-400-120 belonging to *Aéroclub de Béziers Cap d'Agde*. The colours of these two aeroplanes are very similar.



Figure 4: F-GPHL and F-GBUJ (source: *aero clubs*)

2.4 Statements

2.4.1 Statement from pilot of HB-GAC

The pilot of HB-GAC reported seeing a DR400 taxiing towards the taxiway A holding point when he contacted the controller for taxiing instructions. He added that he carried out the last checks of the taxiing checklist during the right turn to taxiway A and was not looking out at that time. When he looked out again, he saw a DR400 take off and thought that it was the aeroplane that was taxiing ahead of him and that the holding point was therefore free. He continued taxiing to the holding point and requested clearance to enter and backtrack the runway. That is when he heard the noise of the impact. He braked immediately and asked on the frequency what was happening. The controller told him that he had hit the DR400 and asked him to shut down the engines.

The pilot explained that because of the time needed to carry them out, he very often carried out the run-up and the take-off checklist on the parking area before asking for taxiing instructions. He explained that this way, he had only the taxiing checklist to complete before reaching the holding point.

He added that he should have made a 120° turn when entering taxiway A leading to the holding point to check that it was clear. He explained that he had not been vigilant enough because he was confident due to the airport being quieter and larger than the airport where he usually flew.

2.4.2 Statement from controller

The controller stated that when the pilot of HB-GAC contacted her to start taxiing, there was a DR400 on the runway about to take off and the DR400 registered F-GPLH, at holding point A, ready for take-off. She asked the pilot of HB-GAC to taxi to holding point A. She stated that she did not inform him of the presence of the DR400 as she did not consider this to be standard phraseology. She then carried out other actions without looking outside. When the pilot of HB-GAC told her that he was ready for take-off, she looked outside and saw the collision between the two aeroplanes.

2.4.3 Statement from instructor of the DR400 registered F-GPLH

The instructor stated that the DR400 was at holding point A, that her student had announced that they were ready for take-off and were waiting for clearance to enter the runway. She heard the pilot of HB-GAC asking in English for clearance to taxi. On impact, the aeroplane was thrown to the right and the stick moved in all directions, damaging all the instruments and hitting her in the legs.

2.5 Traffic information

Air traffic service units provide traffic information to prevent collisions between aircraft, including those operating on the manoeuvring area, and information and instructions to ensure the safe, orderly and expeditious flow of air traffic. The choice of collision avoidance manoeuvres, if any, remains the responsibility of the pilots-in-command in accordance with the Rules of the Air.

As the pilot's field of view of a taxiing aeroplane is reduced, it is important that the airport controller provides the pilot with concise instructions and sufficient information to assist him/her in following or selecting the correct taxiway, and in avoiding collision with other aircraft, vehicles, personnel or obstacles.

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.

Scenario

When the pilot of HB-GAC started taxiing to holding point A, he was aware of a DR400 at this holding point. He then lost sight of it while taxiing. When he turned on the taxiway, he saw a DR400 take off and thought it was this aeroplane. At the end of the turn, he did not have the holding point in sight due to the low forward visibility from inside the cockpit and did not make sure that the taxiway was clear by continuing the turn to look at the holding point from the left side of the aeroplane. Given the position of the DR400 registered F-GBUJ on the runway, there was no need to provide traffic information about this aeroplane and it is possible that the pilot of HB-GAC had a level of understanding of the French language which did not allow him to follow communications in French, and may have degraded his situational awareness. The propeller of HB-GAC severed the rear of the DR400 still at the holding point. The pilot braked quickly, limiting the consequences of the collision.

Contributing factors

The following factors may have contributed to the collision between the two aeroplanes at the holding point:

- the confirmation bias of the pilot of HB-GAC when he saw a DR400 take off and being unaware of the presence of a third aeroplane on the runway when he had started to taxi;
- the lack of vigilance of the pilot of HB-GAC, who felt confident on an airport which was quieter and larger than the one where he was used to flying.

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