



Accident to the CIRRUS SR22
registered **N456AR**
on Monday 7 October 2024
at La Bretonnière la Claye

Time	Around 08:25 ¹
Operator	Private
Type of flight	Cross country
Persons on board	Pilot and one passenger
Consequences and damage	Pilot and passenger fatally injured, aeroplane 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.

Loss of external visual references after take-off, collision with ground

1 HISTORY OF THE FLIGHT

Note: the following information is principally based on statements, radar data and EGPWS² data.

Before his flight bound for Dinard Pleurtuit – Saint-Malo airport, the pilot called the control tower to obtain information about the weather conditions. The controller informed him that the current conditions at Dinard airport were compatible with a VFR flight. The controller warned the pilot that these weather conditions may nevertheless deteriorate.

The pilot took off from runway 08 of Atlantic Air Park private aerodrome situated to the north of Roche-sur-Yon at around 08:25.

Shortly after taking off, the pilot turned left. Between 08:25:27 (see **Figure 1**, point **1**) and 08:26:23 (point **2**), the radar data shows that the pilot continued turning left in a constant climb until reaching 1,500 ft at point **2**.

At 08:26:23, the aeroplane started descending, still in a left-hand turn but with a higher rate of turn and a vertical speed close to 2,000 ft/min. The last recorded radar point at 08:26:51 indicated that the aeroplane was at an altitude of 500 ft. A few seconds later, the aeroplane collided with the ground.

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

² Enhanced Ground Proximity Warning System.

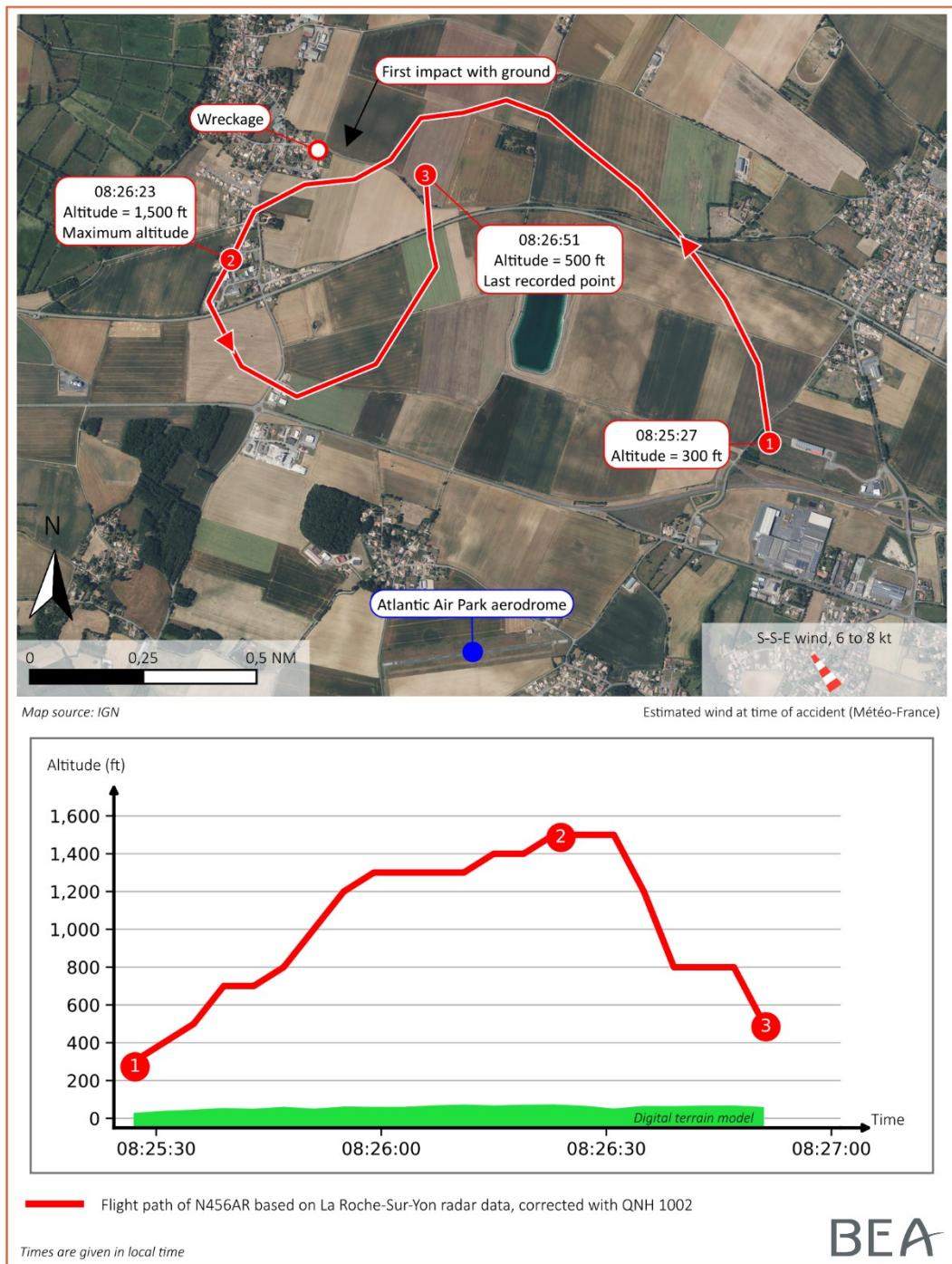


Figure 1: flight path of N456AR (source: BEA)

2 ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

2.1 Examination of site and wreckage

The debris of the aeroplane was dispersed over a distance of 200 m on a flight path oriented 220/230°. The first impact was in a field 120 m from the main wreckage. Numerous pieces of debris and marks in the field, and near dwellings indicated successive impacts with the ground. These elements indicate that the aeroplane collided with the ground with a significant horizontal speed.

Sudden ruptures were observed on the flight controls which is consistent with a rupture on collision with the ground. The sudden rupture in torsion of the crankshaft indicates that the engine was generating torque at the time of the collision.

The airframe parachute was found in the main wreckage, in its housing. Observations made of the site and of the wreckage confirmed that the pilot had not activated it.

The examinations carried out did not identify a technical failure that could explain the accident.

2.2 Meteorological information

The French met office, Météo-France, estimated that the meteorological conditions at the time of the accident at La Bretonnière-La-Claye were:

- overcast (7 to 8 oktas) with a cloud base between 300 and 400 ft;
- surface visibility between 8 and 10 km;
- wind from 140 to 150° of 6 to 8 kt with gusts of 12 kt;
- ground temperature 15°C and dew point temperature 15°C;
- QNH 1,002 hPa.

The 08:30 METAR for La Rochelle aerodrome situated 35 km south of the accident site gave a cloud base at 300 ft of 5 to 6 oktas.

The 08:30 METAR for Roche-sur-Yon aerodrome situated 26 km north of the accident site gave a cloud base at 300 ft of 7 to 8 oktas.

The 06:00 UTC (08:00 local time) SIGWX chart of 7 October 2024 indicated for the area surrounding Atlantic Air Park private aerodrome, visibility of 8 km locally reduced to 1.5 km; locally stratus of 5 to 6 oktas based at an altitude of between 600 and 1,000 ft and locally, the presence of mist.

Two witnesses with an aeronautical background situated close to the aerodrome at the time that the aeroplane took off, indicated that the cloud layer was dense and low. One of the witnesses mentioned that the top of the Saint Cyr en Talmondais water tower (of a height of 75 m and an altitude of around 100 m) was not visible. This same witness estimated the visibility as having been around 5 to 6 km.

An eyewitness to the accident mentioned the presence of low cloud and mist at the time of the occurrence.

2.3 Pilot information

The 78-year-old pilot held a PPL(A) licence with a SEP rating valid until 31 December 2025. He had logged 916 flight hours including 2 hours in the 30 days preceding the accident.

He held a class 2 medical certificate issued on 30 January 2024 and valid until 1 February 2025.

The passenger did not hold a pilot licence.

2.4 Aircraft information

The Cirrus SR22 was equipped with an EGPWS³ whose functions included alerting the pilot of an imminent collision with the ground. However, the aeroplane took off from a private aerodrome that was not referenced in the system's database. In order to avoid the activation of erroneous alerts during the take-off, the "terrain inhibit" function had been manually activated which meant that the warnings that could have been generated by the EGPWS were inhibited.

The SR22 was equipped with a CAPS⁴ which is an integral part of the aeroplane's certification. Certain maintenance actions on the CAPS are therefore mandatory in order to keep the certificate of airworthiness valid.

2.5 Scope of flight information

The N456AR CAPS system had to be replaced before 16 October 2024. To do this, the owner had an appointment with a maintenance shop on Guernsey on 7 October 2024.

The pilot had exchanged several emails with the workshop in which he mentioned that he was worried that he would not be able to fly over due to the weather conditions. However, in an email sent on 5 October, the pilot indicated that the weather conditions seemed to be improving and that he should arrive at the maintenance workshop in the morning of 7 October. The BEA is not aware of any other exchanges between the pilot and the maintenance workshop after this last email.

As the pilot did not hold the FCL.055⁵, he had planned to first fly to Dinard to meet up with a pilot who did hold the FCL.055 and with whom he would then fly to Guernsey.

³ Enhanced Ground Proximity Warning System

⁴ Cirrus Airframe Parachute System

⁵ English proficiency test issued by the French civil aviation authority (Direction Générale de l'Aviation Civile). A French pilot must have a valid FCL.055 level 4, 5 or 6 in order to fly abroad as pilot-in-command.

3 CONCLUSIONS

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

Scenario

The pilot had an appointment with a maintenance workshop situated on Guernsey in order to service the airframe parachute of his Cirrus SR22. As he did not hold the required English language proficiency certificate (FCL.055) to fly to Guernsey, he had planned to fly to Dinard in order to pick up a pilot who had the FCL.055 before going to Guernsey.

The pilot took off from Atlantic Air Park private aerodrome despite weather conditions incompatible with a VFR flight. Rapidly, after taking off, the aeroplane very probably entered the cloud layer. It is likely that the pilot then lost his visual references. As he did not hold an instrument rating, the pilot was not able to orientate himself. After flying for just over one minute, the aeroplane entered a continuous left-hand turn in descent. As the height of the cloud base was around 300 ft, the pilot did not manage to correct the flight path of the aeroplane before the latter collided with the ground.

Contributing factor

The following factor may have contributed to the collision with the ground:

- an underestimation of the risks in carrying out the flight due to his determination to get to his destination (get-home-it). The flight was undertaken to go to a maintenance shop which was to carry out an operation required for the continuing airworthiness of N456AR. The get-home-it risk has been highlighted in the BEA's safety lessons concerning light aeroplanes in [2021](#), [2022](#) and [2024](#).

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