



**Accident** to the Rolladen-Schneider LS6-B  
registered **OH-726**  
on Thursday 25 April 2024  
at Seyne-les-Alpes aerodrome

Time	Around 12:30 <sup>1</sup>
Operator	Private
Type of flight	Cross-country
Persons on board	Pilot
Consequences and damage	Pilot severely injured, glider 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.

**Manoeuvre to avoid vegetation, stall at low height,  
hard landing**

**1 HISTORY OF THE FLIGHT**

*Note: the following information is principally based on statements and FLARM data from the glider.*

The day before the occurrence, the pilot carried out a wave soaring flight departing from Fayence aerodrome. He planned to fly towards Italy and then back to Fayence. On the return leg, the pilot did not manage to stay in the laminar wave layer and re-entered the turbulent rotor layer. He tried for several hours to gain altitude in the Ubaye valley, without success. He then headed towards Seyne-les-Alpes, where he landed after nine hours of flight.

The next day, the pilot prepared for a return flight to Fayence. At 12:28, the pilot started the winch take-off (see **Figure 1**, point **1**), then the pilot released the cable at a height<sup>2</sup> of approximately 350 m (point **2**).

He bypassed the town of Seyne<sup>3</sup>, then he searched for uplifts by making spirals. His altitude was constantly decreasing. At 12:32, at a height of approximately 100 m (point **4**), the pilot decided to return to Seynes-les-Alpes aerodrome. At the start of the left-hand downwind leg for runway 31, he estimated that he was too low and decided to land on runway 13. The pilot indicated that due to trees on his path (point **6**), he then made a nose-up input to fly over them. This input caused the glider to stall and then to land hard on the runway.

The pilot immediately felt a severe pain in his back. He got out of the glider but could not walk. The chief-pilot got to him, laid him down on the grass and called the emergency services.

<sup>1</sup> Except where otherwise indicated, the times in this report are in local time.

<sup>2</sup> This corresponds to a height of approximately 330 m from the threshold of runway 31.

<sup>3</sup> The town of Seyne is located 1.2 km north-west of the aerodrome.

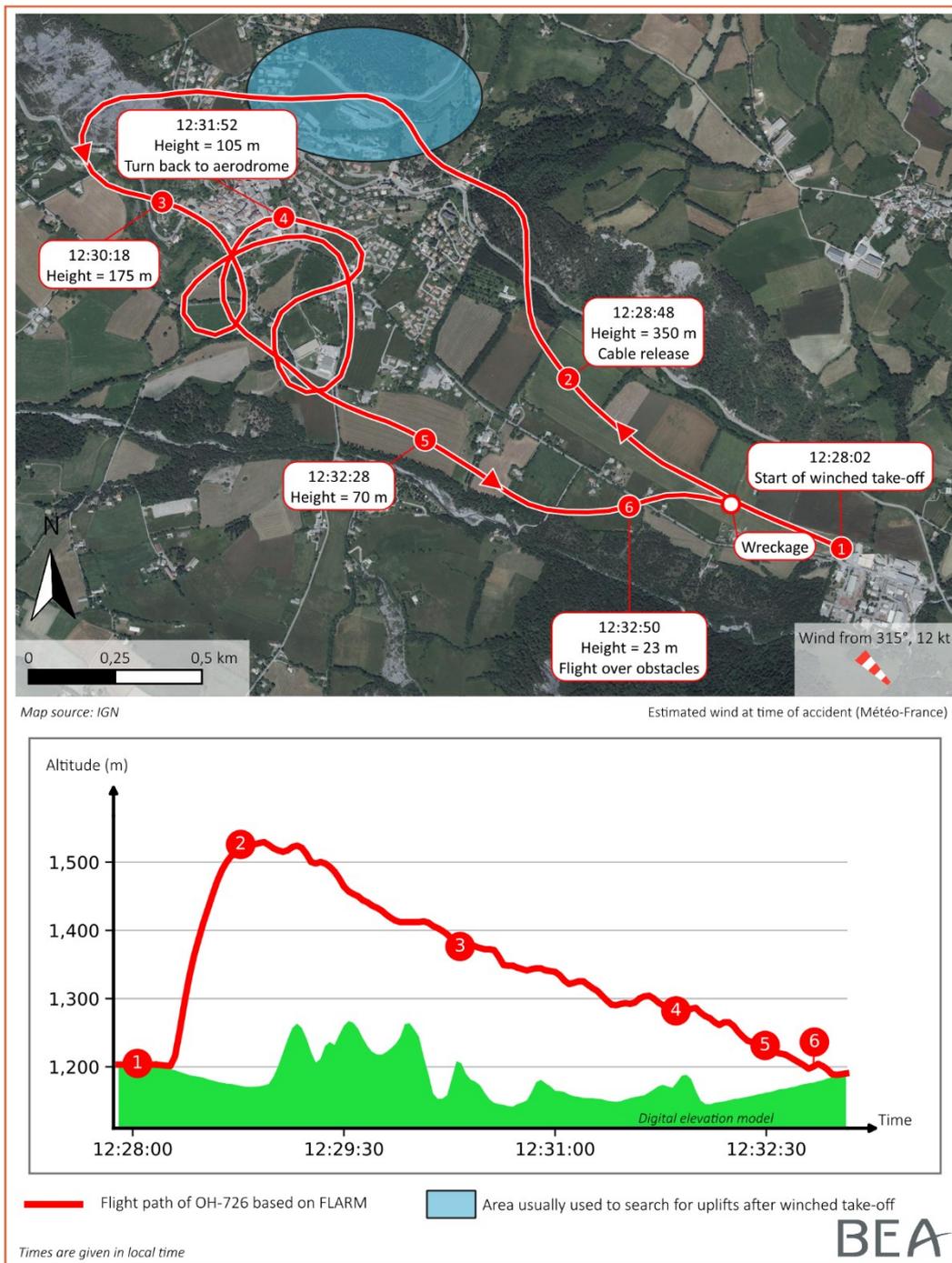


Figure 1: glider flight path

## 2 ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

### 2.1 Aerodrome information

Seyne-les-Alpes aerodrome is a private aerodrome with access restrictions<sup>4</sup>. It has a grass runway 13-31 measuring 850 m x 45 m with an average gradient of 3% (upward-sloping at QFU 13°).

<sup>4</sup> The BASULM sheet for the aerodrome can be found using this link: [LF0430](#).

## 2.2 Meteorological information

The meteorological conditions estimated by Météo-France in the vicinity of the accident site at around 16:00 were as follows:

- calm and dry weather;
- north-westerly wind of 10 to 15 kt, gusting to 20 kt;
- clear sky;
- QNH of 1,007 hPa.

## 2.3 Pilot information

The 47-year-old pilot held a Sailplane Pilot Licence (SPL) issued in 2015, along with winch launch and tow launch ratings. He also held a Private Pilot Licence - Aeroplanes (PPL(A)) as well as a microlight pilot licence issued in Finland.

He had logged around 1,150 flight hours in gliders (848 hours of which on the LS6), 860 flight hours in microlights and 60 flight hours in aeroplanes. In the three months prior to the accident, he had logged 86 flight hours, all on gliders.

He had performed 280 winch take-offs, 45 of which in the 12 months prior to the accident. The last winch launch prior to the accident took place in September 2023.

## 2.4 Glider information

The LS6 registered OH-726 is a single-seat glider with a wingspan of 15 m, a maximum lift-to-drag ratio of around 42 and a minimum descent rate of 0.6 m/s.

The pilot was the owner of the glider since 2020.

Given the circumstances of the event, the BEA did not go to the accident site and did not examine the glider. Based on the pilot's statements and the observations made by the French air transport gendarmerie brigade (BGTA), the damage was limited to the landing gear. The flaps were found in the landing position.



Figure 2: glider after the accident (Source: BGTA)

## 2.5 Statements

### 2.5.1 Pilot's statement

The pilot explained that after the release of the winch cable, he headed towards the town of Seyne, because he had seen a glider spiralling there a few minutes before taking off. In the end, he could not find any uplifts, only had negative "vertical speed values" and was soon low. He then decided to head towards the downwind leg for runway 31 because of the wind direction. During the transition, he also found negative vertical speed values. At the start of the downwind leg, he estimated that he was too low to continue the runway circuit and decided to land on runway 13. The pilot stated that he had no memory of the inputs he made on the flaps.

The pilot also stated that he regularly carried out circuits in the Alps and that he was used to winch take-offs. He specified that, given the length of the cable at Seyne-les-Alpes (1,100 m), he expected to be at a greater height on releasing the winch cable.

He also added that in Finland, he usually took off with a QFE altimeter setting. At Seyne, the pilot used the QNH, in line with the flying club practices. In his opinion, the fact that he took off with a QNH setting could have biased the estimation of his height during the flight.

The pilot specified that he suffered a collapsed vertebrae during the accident, from which he fully recovered in two months.

### 2.5.2 Seynes Alpes Gliding Association chief-pilot's statement

The chief-pilot explained that the usual practice after releasing the winch cable was to search for uplifts on the ridges to the north and near the aerodrome. Runway 13 is the preferred runway for landing because of its gradient, even with a light tailwind (up to 15 km/h).

According to him, at this time of the year and at the time when the pilot took off, there are generally adverse aerological conditions. It is better to wait until the breeze sets in, in the early afternoon. The chief-pilot explained that he suggested to the pilot that he wait before taking off.

He indicated that although the pilot had never performed a winch release at Seyne, considering his overall and winch release experience, he only gave him a briefing on the ground (principally on the various cable break scenarios, the off-field landing fields near the aerodrome and the specific characteristics of the runway) before his departure. After the release of the winch cable, the pilot was at a height of 350 m (which the chief-pilot considered as nominal).

The chief-pilot observed the pilot approaching the aerodrome, at a height of a few tens of metres, initially heading towards the downwind leg for runway 31. He then contacted him by radio and suggested that, given his height, he should directly join the final for runway 13. After that, he saw the pilot converge towards runway 13, then slightly climb to avoid collision with trees on the side of the runway. The glider then stalled flat over the runway at a height of around 5 m.

## 2.6 Consultation with the Gliding Federation

According to the French Gliding Federation (FFVP), for a 1,100 m cable, the height at the time of release of the winch cable is usually around 400 m. However, given the altitude of Seyne aerodrome (3,937 ft), a height of 350 m can be expected.

The FFVP also specified that the safety rule recommended to pilots when searching for uplifts near an aerodrome is to join the downwind leg at a minimum height of 250 m.

### 3 CONCLUSIONS

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

#### Scenario

The pilot carried out for the first time, a winch take-off from Seyne-les-Alpes aerodrome. He released the cable at a height of around 350 m and then moved away from the aerodrome to spiral in an area where he had seen a glider flying prior to his take-off.

He began his spirals at a height of around 175 m, i.e. below the minimum height recommended by the FFVP to join an aerodrome circuit.

This zone was not conducive to the presence of uplifts, given the aerological conditions at the time of the day. The glider lost altitude and the pilot turned around towards the downwind leg for runway 31 while he was at a height of around 100 m. Realising that he was too low, he finally changed his action plan by heading towards runway 13. On joining the runway circuit from the side of this runway, the pilot found himself facing trees and made a nose-up input to pass over them. The glider then stalled a few metres high and made hard contact with the runway.

#### Contributing factor

The pilot's strong desire to return to Fayence may have contributed to him rejecting the flight at a late stage.

#### Safety lessons

##### Energy-absorbing seat cushion

The pilot did not have an energy-absorbing seat cushion with him.

The report concerning the accident to the LS6 registered [D-6423](#) on 26 June 2021 indicated that the presence of a Dynafoam energy-absorbing seat cushion most probably mitigated the consequences of a hard contact with the ground for the pilot.

The British Gliding Association published an [article on the usefulness of using this type of equipment](#).

The pilot acquired a Dynafoam cushion after the accident.

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