

Safety Investigation Report

Ref. AAIU-2019-05-18-01
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Status: Final

About this report

As per ICAO Annex 13 and EU regulation EU 996/2010, each civil aviation safety investigation shall be concluded with a report in a form appropriate to the type and seriousness of the accident and serious incident. For this occurrence, a limited-scope, fact-gathering investigation and analysis was conducted in order to produce a short summary report.

It is not the purpose of the Air Accident Investigation Unit to apportion blame or liability. The sole objective of the investigation and the reports produced is the determination of the causes, and, where appropriate define recommendations in order to prevent future accidents and incidents.

INTRODUCTION

| | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| Classification: | Accident | Occurrence category: | Loss of lifting conditions en-route (LOLI) Abnormal Runway Contact (ARC) |
| Level of investigation: | Limited | Type of operation: | Non-commercial – Introductory flight |
| Date and time¹: | 18 May 2019 at 12:10 UTC | Phase: | Landing |
| Location: | Field in the commune of Froidchapelle | Operator: | Cercle Européen de Vol à Voile (CEVV) |
| Aircraft: | PZL Swidnik PW-6U | Aircraft damage: | Substantial |
| Aircraft category: | Sailplane (Glider) – Non-Powered | Injuries: | 2 minor |

Abstract

During a field landing, the sailplane made an avoidance manoeuvre during final approach, resulting in a hard landing.

Table 1: Summary of factors

| | |
|----------------|--|
| Organisational | Not determined |
| Technical | Not determined |
| Human | Task performance – Action – Incorrect action performance - Pilot (altimeter setting) Action /decision – Action – Delayed action – Pilot Decision making/judgment - Pilot |
| Environmental | Physical environment – Object – Trees – Effect on operation |

¹ All time data in this report are indicated in UTC, unless otherwise specified

1. FACTUAL INFORMATION

1.1 History of the flight and damage

The flight was an introductory² flight for the passenger.

The flight started at the aerodrome of Cerfontaine (EBCF) and lasted 40 minutes. The meteorological conditions were adequate for the flight with good thermal activities.

When the pilot realized the sailplane was too low to be able to reach EBCF airfield, he looked for a suitable place to land and made the approach.

The pilot misjudged the configuration of the field and had to make an avoidance manoeuvre because of the presence of trees in the approach path.

The sailplane got unbalanced and the left wing touched the ground first, the nose of the sailplane hit the ground hard. The sailplane made a ground loop.

The two occupants climbed out the sailplane with slight injuries.

The sailplane's nose was heavily damaged.

Afterwards it appeared that the altimeter setting was set on the barometric pressure on mean sea level (QNH) instead of the prevailing pressure on the airfield (QFE).



Figure 1: location of the outfield landing

² “Introductory flight” means any flight against remuneration or other valuable consideration consisting of an air tour of short duration, offered by an approved training organisation or an organisation created with the aim of promoting aerial sport or leisure aviation, for the purpose of attracting new trainees or new members. (definition as per Regulation (EU) No 965/2012)

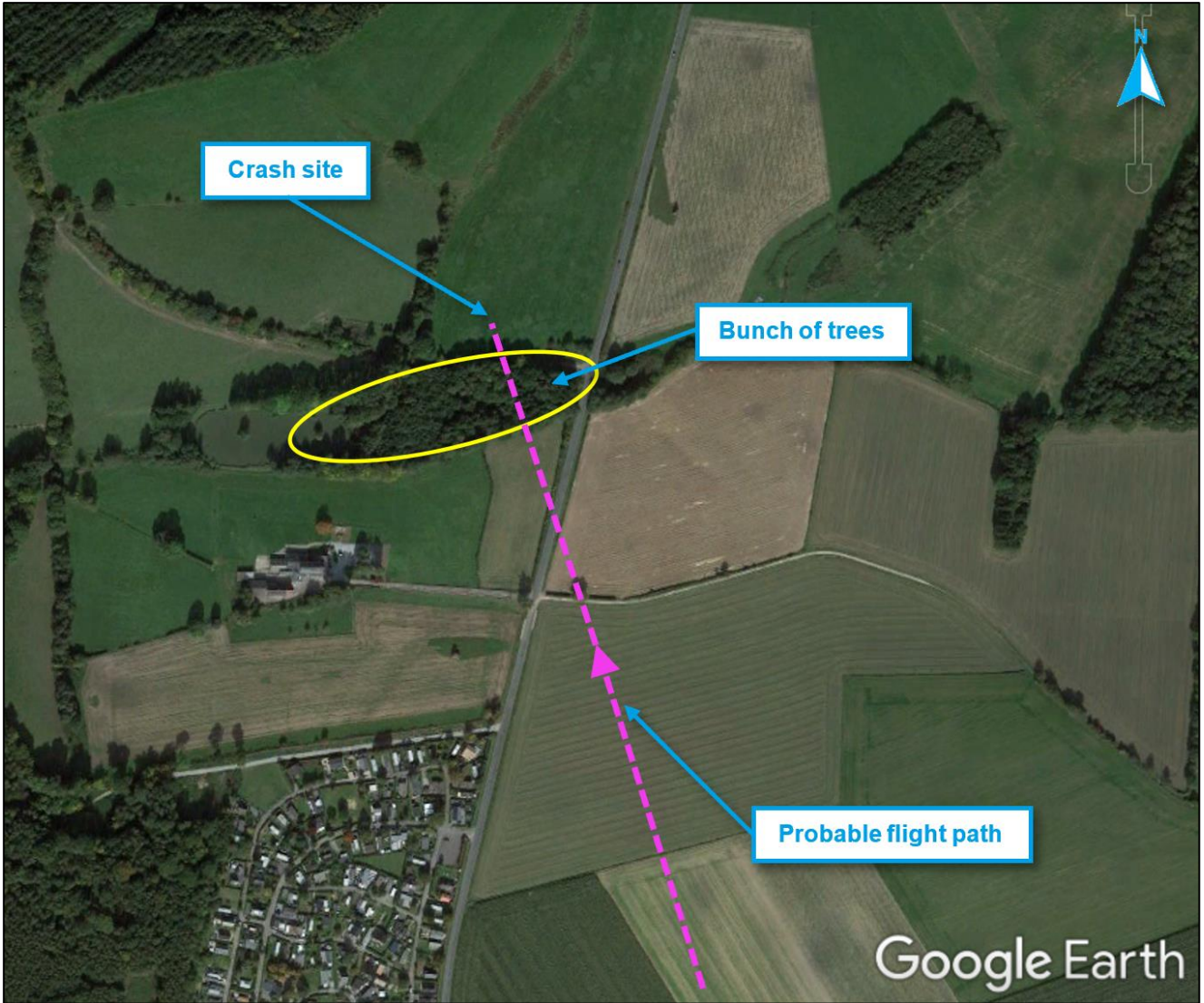


Figure 2: landing area



Figure 3: the sailplane after the landing

1.2 Pilot information

Table 2: Pilot information

| | | | | | |
|-------------|---|--------|------|-----|----|
| Nationality | Belgian | Gender | Male | Age | 75 |
| License | Sailplane Pilot Licence first issued by the Belgian Aeroclub in July 1970. Converted into EASA SPL license. | | | | |
| Ratings | Sailplane Flight Instructor valid until February 2021. | | | | |

The pilot has an extensive experience on sailplanes. He is a member of the CEVV (European Soaring Club) that recently moved from the aerodrome of Namur (EBNM) to EBCF.

1.3 Meteorological information

Table 3: METAR at Florennes (EBFS), 13 NM East of the landing site

| | |
|-------------|--|
| Wind | Direction 70 degrees and speed 4 knots |
| Clouds | Few at 4500 ft, broken at 6500 ft |
| Visibility | 10 km or more |
| Temperature | 15 °C |
| QNH | 1006 hPa |

1.4 Organisation

The flight, an introductory flight, was organised by the CEVV (Cercle Européen de Vol à Voile), a Belgian non-profit organisation providing various activities in relation with sailplanes and aviation. The training activity of CEVV falls under the authority of the Federation of French-speaking Soaring Clubs (FCFVV – Fédération des Clubs Francophones de Vol à Voile), Declared Training Organisation (ref. BE.DTO.132).

The DTO operates from 5 different platforms with 9 gliding clubs (including CEVV). The activities are performed under the general procedure defined by FCFVV.

1.5 Aerodrome information

The airfield of Cerfontaine, EBCF is located N 50°09'10" – E 004°23'14", at 2,7 km south of the city of Cerfontaine (Belgium - Province of Namur). The operator is EBCF S.A. and the use of the airfield is subject to prior permission from the operator (PPR).

The elevation is 955 ft (291 m) and it is equipped with two parallel 30 m wide grass runways oriented 117° / 297°.

2. ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS

The analysis of the event was performed by the training organisation FCFVV, as part of the Annual internal review and activity report, although this event is not a specific training related occurrence. This event was considered a generic safety issue in gliding activities.

The report states:

‘Out-landing of a PW-6 glider with stall on final due to tree obstacle avoidance followed by a total loss of the glider and slightly injured passenger and pilot.

Main causes:

- *New environment of flying (crash occurred on new site of activity)*
- *Confusion in altimeter setting (QNH versus QFE)*
Note: meaning a difference of 291m in altitude indication
- *Late decision of pilot to choose an out-landing field.’*

3. SAFETY ACTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Safety actions taken by the FCFVV:

- Refreshing training about **VERDO** (**V**ent **E**tat de surface **R**elief **D**imensions **O**bstacles) out landing issues and associated risks (environment, altimeter settings, choice of field).
- On advice of the AAIU(Be), the FCFVV confirmed that they will
 - analyse and reduce potential risks before flying in a new environment
 - use a ‘check list before take-off’ to reduce the chance of confusion in altimeter setting QNH or QFE.