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INVESTIGATION REPORT

Accident to the ROBIN - DR400 - 180 registered F-GSBZ

on 26 August 2018
at Saumur - Saint-Florent (Maine-et-Loire)

Time	Around 14:10[1]
Operator	Aéroclub de Granville
Type of flight	Cross-country
Persons on board	Pilot and three passengers
Consequences and damage	Aeroplane destroyed

This is a courtesy translation by the BEA of the Final Report on the Safety Investigation published in November 2021. As accurate as the translation may be, the original text in French is the work of reference.

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

Loss of control at landing, collision with ground in safety area to left of runway

1 - HISTORY OF THE FLIGHT

Note: the following information is principally based on statements.

On Friday 24 August, a group of seven pilots split between two of the Aéroclub de Granville's DR400 aeroplanes took off from Granville - Mont-Saint-Michel aerodrome (Manche) bound for Castelnaudary-Villeneuve aerodrome (Aude) for the weekend. In the morning of Sunday 26 August, the group took off from this aerodrome to return to Granville. Several stopovers were scheduled to change pilots. The two aeroplanes took off at around 13:00 from Guéret - Saint-Laurent aerodrome (Creuse) bound for Saumur - Saint-Florent aerodrome (Maine-et-Loire). Four of the seven pilots were on board the DR400-180 registered F-GSBZ.

During the final approach for runway 28, flying over the town of Saumur instinctively led the pilot to fly above the vertical profile, with a steeper slope than normal. On short final, one of the two passengers in the rear seat suggested reducing the power to decrease the speed. The pilot flared at a speed of around 130 km/h and at a height estimated to be too high. The aeroplane bounced when it made contact with the runway and banked right. The passenger in the front right seat took the controls and adjusted the power to stabilise the aeroplane. The aeroplane landed with a left bank angle and exited the runway to the left, 300 m from the threshold of runway 28 and at a speed of around 90 km/h. After passing over a rut in the safety area to the left of the runway, the right wing made contact with the ground. With a nose-down attitude, the aeroplane spun with its right wing touching the ground and came to a stop in the grass, 12 m from the edge of and perpendicular to the runway.

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2 - ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

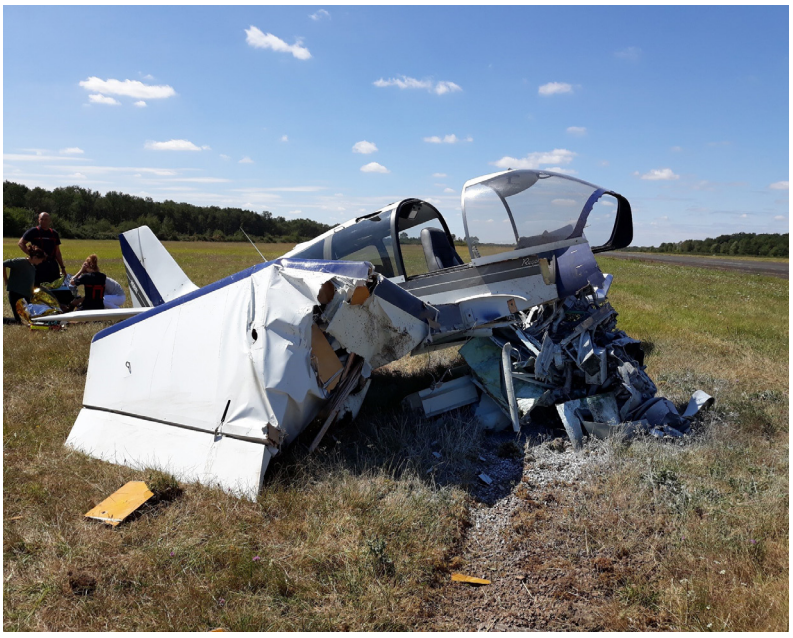
2.1 Final approach speeds

The recommended final approach speed is 125 km/h with flaps in the second detent position or 130 km/h + ½ gust value with flaps in the first detent position in crosswind or with strong gusts of wind.

2.2 Examination of site and wreckage

The aeroplane was around 450 m from the threshold of runway 28 and 12 m to the left of the edge of the runway.

The right wing was folded in two places along its length and its leading edge was destroyed (see illustration). The left wing was intact with the exception of the flap, in the landing position, which was slightly damaged at its trailing edge. The propeller and the engine were lying under the front of the fuselage, almost vertical (see illustration). The propeller blades showed evidence of power at the time of the collision with the ground.



Photograph taken after the emergency services had intervened

2.3 Pilot information

The pilot held a Light Aircraft Pilot Licence - Aeroplanes (LAPL(A)) issued on 29 August 2017. She had logged 129 flight hours, 43 hours of which as pilot-in-command, and 2 hours and 40 minutes of which in the three months prior to the accident, all as pilot-in-command.

She stated that the flight lasting around one hour had taken place in turbulent conditions that may have required a lot of concentration on her part. The pilot thought that the right bank angle after the bounce was due to a gust of wind.

2.4 Statements

Different statements from the other participants of the weekend excursion reported that:

- During the weekend, the pilots who had little flying experience were accompanied by a more experienced pilot in the front right seat, as was the case on the day of the accident on board F-GSBZ, with a pilot who had logged around 800 flight hours seated to the right of the pilot.

- The final approach slope was steeper than normal. One of the two passengers seated in the rear seat (who had logged around 550 flight hours) stated that the pilot had not seemed confident during the final approach flying overhead houses.
- The pilot had probably flared too high.
- The taking of control of the aircraft by more experienced pilots was not generally envisaged.
- One of the passengers on board the other DR400, which was in the downwind leg for runway 28, stated that he had seen the aeroplane deviate to the left of the path. He added that he thought the pilot had initiated a go-around, with insufficient acceleration and a stall on the left wing of the aeroplane.

2.5 Aerodrome information

Saumur - Saint-Florent aerodrome has a paved runway, measuring 1,450 m long and 30 m wide. A displaced threshold on runway 28 reduces the landing distance available to 1,310 m.

The town of Saumur is located to the east of the aerodrome, under the final approach to runway 28, around 1 NM from the threshold of runway 28. The specific instructions on the aerodrome's VAC chart indicate to pilots the presence of trees in the landing and take-off obstacle-limitation areas of thresholds 10 and 28.

2.6 Meteorological information

The meteorological conditions at 14:00 at Angers-Marcé aerodrome (Maine-et-Loire) located 20 NM north-north-east of Saumur - Saint-Florent aerodrome were as follows: south-south-westerly wind of 12 kts, visibility greater than 10 km, a few clouds, temperature of 23°C, QNH1008.

The pilot indicated the presence of gusts of wind.

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

During a leg as part of an excursion organised by seven pilots with two of the Aéroclub de Granville's DR400 aeroplanes, the pilot of F-GSBZ probably flared too high at high speed. The passenger seated to the right of the pilot took control of the aircraft and adjusted the power to stabilise the path of the aeroplane which was banking right after bouncing off the runway. The plane deviated to the left of the runway. The right wing then made contact with the ground, in the safety area to the left of the runway, and the aeroplane spun 90° before coming to a stop.

Contributing factors

The following factors may have contributed to the initiation of the flare too high:

- The following of a steep slope in final approach, unusual for the pilot, possibly due to a lack of experience or the erroneous assessment of the height flying over the houses and trees under the final approach path.
- The suggestion of one of the passengers seated in the rear seat to reduce the power.

It was not possible to determine with accuracy the actions made on the flight controls by the pilot seated in the front left seat and by the passenger seated in the front right seat after the bounce and the roll to the right. The loss of control and the exit from the left of the runway after the second contact with the runway may have been the result of simultaneous and uncoordinated actions.