

Altitude Loss of Parachute-Load Systems Using Clustered Parachutes

K.-H. Fu* and R. Koch*

German Aerospace Research Establishment, Braunschweig, Flughafen, Germany

Theme

FOR a successful recovery of persons or loads with parachutes, a certain minimum altitude is necessary for the deceleration of the parachute-load-system down to the desired landing velocity. This study investigates the changes of the minimum altitude if clustered parachutes are used.

Contents

The study includes experiments³ as well as a theoretical analysis¹ of the problems. A 130-kg test vehicle was used for drop-tests from a Do-27 aircraft. The cluster consisted of two or three circular flat solid cloth parachutes, each having 28 gores and 28 suspension lines. The total nominal area of the cluster was 58 m². The diameter of the parachutes decreased accordingly to the number of canopies in the cluster, e.g. using three canopies the parachutes nominal diameter had to be $D_0 = 4.96$ m. The parachutes were packed in a single bag with three separate compartments. The bag was stored in a cylindrically shaped bay of the test vehicle. Two seconds after dropping the test vehicle from the aircraft the lid of the parachute bay was fired. The lid extracted a 0.8-m-diam circular flat solid cloth pilot chute which then extracted and pulled off the parachute bag.

As minimum altitude loss H^* is investigated which arises between the moment of the opening of the parachute package ($t=0$, Fig. 1) and the time when the landing velocity is reached ($t=t^*$), the landing velocity being defined as $1.2 v_e$ (with v_e =equilibrium velocity). The recovery in this time interval consists of three phases: deployment, filling, and transition. The altitude loss during deployment depends on the extraction system.

For the computation of the altitude loss during the filling and transition phases the parachute-load-system is supposed to consist of two point masses. The equation of motion in the direction of the connection of the two points for the payload is given^{2,4} and is of the form

$$m_L v_L = -F - T_L + W_L \sin \gamma_L \quad (1)$$

and for the canopy is

$$m_s \dot{v}_C + v_C \dot{m}_s = F - T_C + W_C \sin \gamma_C \quad (2)$$

where m =mass, v =velocity, T =component of the drag force in the direction of the connection, $W \sin \gamma$ =component of the weight force in the direction of the connection, F =resulting suspension line force, and m_s =sum of canopy mass and vir-

tual mass. The subscripts L and C indicate load and canopy, respectively.

It is supposed, that the shape of the canopy is unchanged after the filling.² Thus, for the transition phase $m_s = m_C$ and $\dot{m}_s = 0$ in Eq. (2). If in the parachute-load-system the single parachute is replaced by several parallel parachutes that are equally filled, Eq. (2) becomes

$$m_s \dot{v}_C + v_C \dot{m}_s = F/n_k - T_C + W_C \sin \gamma_C \quad (3)$$

with n_k =number of canopies.

A comparison of the theoretical and experimental time histories of the rate of descent of parachute-load-systems with 1, 2, and 3 canopies is shown in Fig. 1. The following conditions are supposed: total mass m_T of the system = 130 kg, total nominal area S_0 of the canopies = 58 m², launch velocity $v_a = 55$ m/sec. The minimum altitude loss as a function of the

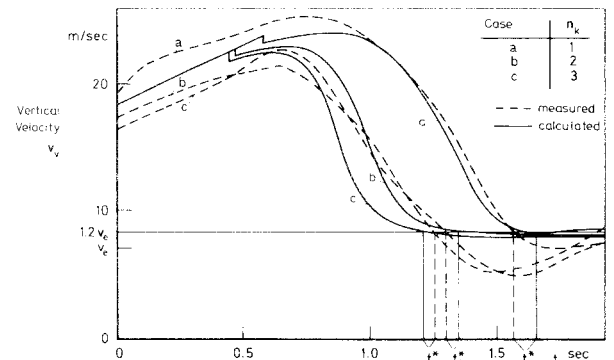


Fig. 1 Comparison of calculated and measured rates of descent.

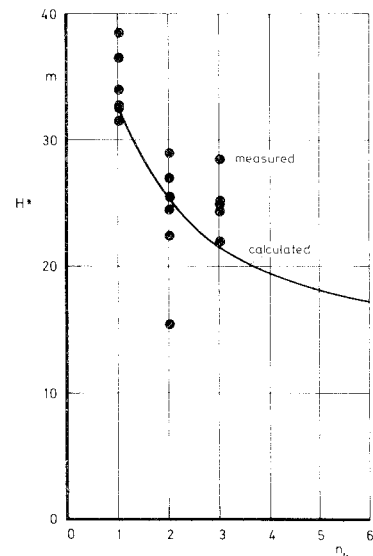


Fig. 2 Altitude loss vs number of canopies.

Presented as Paper 75-1356 at the AIAA 5th Aerodynamics Deceleration Systems Conference, Albuquerque, N. Mex., Nov. 17-19, 1975; submitted Oct. 24, 1975; synoptic received June 25, 1976; revision received Aug. 31, 1976. Full paper available from AIAA Library, 750 Third Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10017. Price: Microfiche, \$2.00, hard copy \$5.00. Order must be accompanied by remittance.

Index categories: Launch Vehicle Systems (including Ground Support); Entry Deceleration Systems and Flight Mechanics.

*Research Scientist.

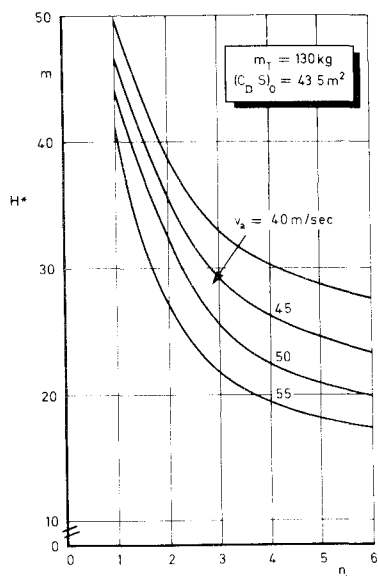


Fig. 3 Calculated altitude loss for various numbers of canopies and launch velocities.

number of canopies is represented in Fig. 2. It is shown that this minimum altitude loss decreases with the number of canopies. If the relatively high scatter of the measured values is taken into account, there exists a satisfactory agreement between theory and measurements. Fig. 3 shows the dependence of the minimum altitude loss on the number of canopies for various launch velocities. If the launch velocity is increased, the minimum altitude loss decreases. Summarizing, to obtain an altitude loss as small as possible (i.e., for a successful recovery from low altitudes) it is useful to use several small parachutes instead of one parachute.

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It is generally the objective of the designer of a moving vehicle to reduce the base drag—that is, to raise the base pressure to a value as close as possible to the freestream pressure. The most direct and obvious method of achieving this is to shape the body appropriately—for example, through boattailing or by introducing attachments. However, it is not feasible in all cases to make such geometrical changes, and then one may consider the possibility of injecting a fluid into the base region to raise the base pressure. This book is especially devoted to a study of the various aspects of base flow control through injection and combustion in the base region.

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