



missing.aero / missed.aero

a new state of the art searching for lost airplanes

*Solving Aviation Mysteries with Cutting-Edge Technology:
A Data-Driven Approach to Avoid Cognitive Biases.*

If a civil aircraft fails to reach its destination, rescuers launch a Search and Rescue (SAR) operation to find survivors. If they do not locate the wreckage within 8 to 15 days, they presume everyone on board is dead and call off the search, classifying the plane and its occupants as missing. As a result, thousands of aircraft and tens of thousands of people remain missing worldwide.

If a military aircraft does not return from its mission, a Combat Search and Rescue (CSAR) operation is launched to locate, rescue, and recover the crew while preventing their capture. In combat zones, CSAR missions are typically brief and limited. They are often resumed after the conflict ends—sometimes months, years, or even decades later. Tens of thousands of people remain missing in action (MIA) around the world.

Afterward, governments, ad hoc groups, families, or NGOs spend years or even decades searching for the lost planes. These highly emotional searches are driven by cognitive biases, without protocols or methods, isolated, fragmented, and undocumented, with a very low success rate.

In 2017, experts in Switzerland founded the research association **missing.aero** to set a new standard for finding lost aircraft, focusing primarily on missions within the American continent. In 2025, they launched the **missed.aero** association to expand search efforts worldwide.

In both associations, hundreds of bachelor's and master's students, specialists, and engineers work together in 15 branches across five continents to establish a new state of the art. This means an objective, data-driven interpretation of historical facts, leveraging advances in data analysis, satellite remote sensing, agent-based models, digital twins and artificial intelligence.

To develop and test their tools, **missing.aero** and **missed.aero** conduct search missions for lost aircraft—real cases that remain unresolved.

Why search?

missing.aero and **missed.aero** combine technical expertise with unwavering determination. Our commitment to the search is driven both by the technical challenge and the profound emotional impact of a successful mission.

Each previous search failure increases the technical challenge, forcing us to re-examine existing information, re-evaluate hypotheses, and refine search methods.

This emotional strength stems from the hope of those whose lives have been shattered by the loss of the occupants of the aircraft we are searching for. Families, friends, and colleagues wait years, sometimes decades, for answers about the fate of their loved ones.

missing.aero and **missed.aero** coordinate and consolidate search resources and efforts to answer the only question that truly matters: where are they?

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