



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

Military Aircraft Accident Summaries

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11 May 1981

AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT INVOLVING ROYAL AIR FORCE PHANTOM FRG2 XV436

Date: 5 March 1980
Parent Airfield: RAF Coningsby, Lincolnshire
Place of Accident: RAF Coningsby Airfield
Crew: Pilot and navigator
Casualties: 1 Major injury (Navigator)

CIRCUMSTANCES

1. The pilot of Phantom XV 436 had recently completed training on this type of aircraft and was gaining further experience on his first squadron prior to being declared fully operational. On the night of 5 March 1980 he was carrying out practice interceptions when he was alerted to a cabin turbine overspeed by the warning light illuminating. While attempting to remedy this failure he inadvertently operated the wrong lever which, in due course, caused the aircraft's utilities hydraulics system to fail and thus committed him to a flapless landing. Such a landing involves a higher than normal landing speed and he was therefore advised to engage the Rotary Hydraulic Arrestor Gear (RHAG) cable situated on the runway just after the touch-down point. In preparation the pilot lowered the undercarriage by use of the emergency air system, deployed the arrester hook and positioned the aircraft on the glide path for landing.
2. There was a cross-wind of about 10 knots and a cloud-base of 700 feet, but the pilot landed correctly at a satisfactory position on the runway with no bounce. Unfortunately, the hook failed to engage the RHAG cable and the aircraft started to veer off to the right. The pilot attempted to straighten the aircraft but foot pressure several times greater than normal was required because of the hydraulic failure and he was unable to prevent it running off the side of the runway at high speed. Shortly thereafter the crew ejected. XV436 continued across the airfield and eventually came to rest, damaged beyond economical repair, in a neighbouring field. The ensuing fire was quickly extinguished by the airfield fire service.

/CAUSE.....

CAUSE

. An examination of the runway revealed that the aircraft's hook was in contact with the runway well in advance of the arrester cable, but nonetheless it hit the top half of the cable and failed to engage. No definite reason for this was found.

4. The failure of the utilities hydraulic services, caused by the incorrect action taken earlier, resulted in there being no power available to assist the pilot in moving the rudder to maintain directional control of the aircraft. This was not a failure the pilot had previously experienced, and though the hydraulics failure in flight could be practised in the flight simulator, the control of the aircraft on the ground could not. It was concluded that that the crew's decision to abandon the aircraft immediately it left the runway was correct.

SUBSEQUENT ACTION

5. The Phantom Aircrew Manual is being amended to re-emphasise the rudder forces which are required in the event of the loss of hydraulic services.

CLAIMS

6. The only claim resulting from the accident was for damage to two acres of winter barley and this was settled by the Property Services Agency.

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