



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

Military Aircraft Accident Summaries

MAAS 9/82
11 May 1982

AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT INVOLVING ROYAL AIR FORCE BULLDOG MK T1 XX545

Date: 18 September 1980
Parent Airfield: RAF Abingdon, Oxfordshire
Place of Accident: RAF Abingdon
Crew: Two Pilots
Casualties: Two

CIRCUMSTANCES

1. On the morning of 18 September 1980 the Chief Flying Instructor (CFI) of a University Air Squadron (UAS) flew a staff continuation training sortie as captain of XX545 with another Qualified Flying Instructor (QFI) of the same Squadron. The QFI was flying the aircraft from the left hand seat. At a height estimated to be between 350 and 450 ft, the CFI closed the throttle to simulate an engine failure after take-off (EFATO). The QFI commenced a turnback to the left towards the airfield. During this turn the airspeed fell below the recommended gliding speed and, although it is uncertain whether or not the aircraft stalled, the nose dropped rapidly leaving the aircraft in a steep diving attitude heading towards the airfield. The CFI took control and attempted to recover the aircraft but, despite the engine responding normally to his application of full power, he was unable to prevent it from striking the ground with considerable force. The undercarriage collapsed on impact and the aircraft slid along the ground coming to rest still within the airfield boundaries. The CFI received compression fractures of 2 vertebrae and the QFI sustained minor bruising; the aircraft was damaged beyond repair. There was no damage to civilian property or injury to civilian personnel.

CAUSE

2. The accident occurred because the captain did not take over control in sufficient time to prevent the aircraft striking the ground after the QFI misjudged his aircraft handling during what should have been a routine practice emergency.

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SUBSEQUENT ACTION

3. As a result of this accident the Central Flying School conducted a review of the turnback manoeuvre in the Bulldog aircraft. The necessity for practising turnback was confirmed since it is an essential skill for military pilots of single-engined aircraft.

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