



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

Military Aircraft Accident Summaries

MAAS/ 9/81
3 August 1981

AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT INVOLVING ROYAL AIR FORCE HARRIER GR3 XV 761

Date: 28 October 1980

Parent Airfield: Royal Air Force Gutersloh, Federal Republic of Germany

Place of Accident: One kilometre South of Kalenborn, Federal Republic of Germany

Crew: One Pilot

Casualties: One slight injury (pilot)

CIRCUMSTANCES

1. Harrier XV 761 was flying as No 2 of a pair of Harriers at low level. On rolling out of a turn the pilot, flying at some 900 ft AGL, found that he had lagged slightly behind his leader. He increased power to retain the correct formation position but there was a loud bang and the engine ran down. Although he had not seen any birds prior to the engine malfunction, the pilot suspected that the engine had sustained a bird strike so he correctly shut it down and attempted a relight. Although the engine relit normally, it surged as the pilot attempted to increase power and he therefore shut it down again. A second relight attempt produced the same result. By now the aircraft was down to about 300-400 ft AGL and the pilot ejected. He received slight injuries. The aircraft crashed into a wood and was destroyed.

CAUSE

2. Strip examination of the engine revealed extensive pre-crash damage to the high pressure compressor. This had been caused by the passage through the engine of an extraneous piece of metal. Where the object had struck compressor blades, fatigue cracks had propagated from the impact marks and one blade had broken off. The engine was damaged to the extent that it was unable to produce sufficient power for XV 761 to remain airborne. It proved impossible to identify either the piece of metal which caused the original damage or to calculate when it was ingested into the engine.

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3. No evidence of a birdstrike was found either in the aircraft wreckage or during strip examination of the engine; therefore, an engine surge caused by a birdstrike was considered highly unlikely although it could not be ruled out.

SUBSEQUENT ACTIONS

4. The only civilian property damaged was the wooded area into which the aircraft crashed. Claims amounting to £650 for damage have been received.

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