



# MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

## Military Aircraft Accident Summaries

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9 December 1982

### AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT INVOLVING ROYAL AIR FORCE JAGUAR GR1 XX 972

Date: 6 August 1981  
Parent Airfield: Royal Air Force Bruggen, Federal Republic of Germany  
Place of Accident: 2 miles SW Barnard Castle  
Crew: One Pilot  
Casualties: Pilot killed

#### CIRCUMSTANCES

1. Jaguar XX 972 was one of several Jaguars detached from their base in West Germany to an airfield in Scotland to take part in an exercise. On 6 August it was flying as No 4 of a 4 aircraft formation at low level when deteriorating weather forced the aircraft to climb. The leader's radio became unserviceable just before the decision to climb was made and, although the No 2 assumed control of the formation, some confusion occurred and the formation split into 4 individual aircraft. During the climb in cloud, No 4 made 2 routine radio calls enquiring about the height his element leader was passing. It was decided that all 4 aircraft would reverse their course and fly back to where the weather was clear. An order to this effect was transmitted but no acknowledgement was received from No 4. The formation was unable to contact No 4 again; XX 972 had crashed at high speed, virtually wings level, in a nose up attitude. The pilot did not eject and was killed.

#### CAUSE

2. There was no evidence among the wreckage of a technical failure which could have caused the accident. Although a positive cause of this accident could not be determined the most likely was thought to be distraction, possibly combined with instrument failure leading to disorientation. The radar picture of the 4 Jaguars showed that XX 972 was climbing at a slower speed than his element leader; when the 4 aircraft were ordered to turnabout, XX 972 entered a very tight turn. Flight simulator tests revealed that, in order to maintain a turn as tight as that seen on radar, a considerable rate of descent would have developed. It is possible that the pilot was flying on his Head Up instruments, where the Rate of Climb and Descent Indicator has a maximum reading of 2500 ft/min; he may, therefore, have been unaware of the high rate of descent (up to 6000 ft/min) developed by XX 972. Had he suffered an instrument failure at the same time, the situation would have been exacerbated; by the time the pilot became aware of the proximity of the ground, it would have been too late.

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LAIMS

3. An interim payment of £1500 has been paid to a farmer in respect of a bullock that was killed and for damage to fields and hedges. A sum of £843.25p has been paid to the North Eastern Electricity Board for damage to power lines.

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