



# MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

## Military Aircraft Accident Summaries

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MAAS 5/83

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### ACCIDENT TO ROYAL AIR FORCE JAGUAR GR1 XX 758

Date:	18 November 1981
Parent Airfield:	RAF Lossiemouth, Morayshire
Place of Accident:	14 miles, NNW Dingwall
Crew:	One
Casualties:	One pilot killed

#### CIRCUMSTANCES

1. The pilot of Jaguar XX 758 was under training at the Operational Conversion Unit (OCU) and was nearing the end of his course. On 18 Nov 81 he was programmed to fly his first solo Simulated Attack Profile sortie which comprised mock attacks on simulated targets in Scotland, before dropping a practice bomb on an air to ground weapons range. A staff instructor allocated the targets, supervised the planning and authorised the sortie. The weather was forecast to be generally good with excellent visibility and a cloud base in excess of 2000 ft above sea level. Isolated showers had been forecast however, and these were likely to be of sleet or snow over high ground. Approximately 24 mins after take-off from RAF Lossiemouth, XX 758 hit a hillside in the Grudie Valley in a snow shower. The aircraft exploded on impact and the pilot was killed.
2. The pilot was one of two OCU students to fly this sortie on 18 Nov 81. Although each had been allocated the same targets, their routes were not identical, but both had planned to run-in to the second target up Loch Luichart on a westerly heading. The first student found that snow showers to the west precluded an escape from the target area at low-level. He abandoned his attack and climbed out on a safe heading up the line of the Grudie Valley. About 5 mins later witnesses saw or heard another aircraft - subsequently proven to have been XX 758 - flying up the Loch. It was snowing at the time. They heard an explosion and some saw a fireball. While one local civilian went to the scene of the accident, others telephoned the police who alerted the Rescue Co-ordination Centre. It was found that the aircraft had totally disintegrated and that debris was strewn over a wide area.

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CAUSE

3. A Board of Inquiry painstakingly analysed all the available evidence. They deduced that the aircraft had probably been in controlled flight at the moment of impact and that no catastrophic technical failure had occurred. They were also certain that weather conditions in the immediate vicinity of the crash area were well below the prescribed low flying minima. They concluded that the most likely cause of the accident was that the pilot flew into a snow shower, lost his appreciation of distance from the ground and crashed. Regrettably, despite exhaustive investigation an element of uncertainty as to the cause remains.