



# MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

## Military Aircraft Accident Summaries

MAAS 8/83

19 April 1983

### AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT INVOLVING ROYAL AIR FORCE CHIPMUNK T10 WP979

Date: 23 May 1982  
Parent Airfield: Cambridge  
Place of Accident: Near Cambridge Airport  
Crew: One pilot and 1 passenger  
Casualties: 1 major

ADASTRA

No. 5/76787  
623.746:656.7.08

MoD. PR  
DATE 16/5/83

### CIRCUMSTANCES

1. On the morning of 23 May 1982, an RAF Volunteer Reserve (Training) (VR(T)) pilot carried out a series of air experience flights with Air Training Corps (ATC) cadets. He was a regular attendee at the Air Experience Flight (AEF) and had some 14 years experience of flying Chipmunks.
2. The pilot was briefed and authorised for 4 25 minute sorties. He completed 2 uneventful air experience sorties and the aircraft remained serviceable. On the third sortie the pilot flew around the local area pointing out the interesting features to the ATC cadet. He allowed the cadet to handle the aircraft controls and then recovered to the visual circuit at base airfield. The pilot made a rejoining call and on reaching the dead side of the airfield at 2,000 feet began a gentle descent to enter the circuit at 1,000 feet. As the descent started the pilot experienced pains in the lower chest and had difficulty in breathing. He therefore began a gentle turn intending to make a close circuit and to put the aircraft on the ground as quickly as possible, but suddenly he experienced a rapid feeling of nausea and became incapacitated. The cadet in the rear cockpit heard a series of short noises and then observed the pilot's head slumping forward. The aircraft continued in an uncontrolled gentle descending turn until it struck the ground. The rescue services were at the scene of the crash (outside the airfield boundary) within 2 minutes. The pilot suffered major injuries but the ATC cadet was uninjured.

### CAUSE

3. The investigation examined aircraft serviceability, technical defects, bird or lightning strikes, weather conditions, unauthorised manoeuvres in the circuit, passenger interference with the controls, pilot fatigue or stress and pilot incapacitation as possible causes or contributory factors in the accident.

4. The aircraft was serviceable and examination of the wreckage proved that no technical defect had existed at the time of the accident. No evidence of a bird strike was found and the weather was good. The ATC cadet confirmed that he had not touched the controls at any time while in the circuit. The pilot was rested and had eaten both breakfast and lunch. He was under no stress of a private or service nature.

5. The evidence of the eye witnesses to the crash, both in the air and on the ground, suggested that the cause of the accident was pilot incapacitation. However, medical examination of the pilot could find no evidence of any reason for such incapacitation.

#### CLAIMS

6. A claim for crop damage was settled in the sum of £47.00.

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