



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

Military Aircraft Accident Summaries

5 APR 1984

MAAS 13/84

4 April 1984

AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT INVOLVING ROYAL AIR FORCE JET PROVOST T5A XW417

Date: 9 December 1982
Parent Airfield: RAF Church Fenton, near Tadcaster
Place of Accident: Lake Thirlmere, Cumbria
Crew: One
Casualties: 1 Fatal

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ACC No.	S/76787
CLASS	623-746:656.7.08
AUTH	GB-MOD-PW
DATE 13/4/84	

Circumstances

1. On the afternoon of 9 December 1982 the pilot of Jet Provost XW417, a student on a Co-Pilot Enrichment Scheme Course, took off to fly a low level navigation exercise as the third member of a 4 aircraft stream. The weather at low level was generally good, but the pilots in the first, second and fourth aircraft had to deviate from their planned routes to avoid low cloud and poor visibility in an area of high ground in the Lake District.
2. Witnesses saw XW417 manoeuvring at low level, in poor weather conditions over Lake Thirlmere, some 3nms west of its intended course. Shortly afterwards, further witnesses heard the aircraft approaching the southern end of the lake but were unable to see it due to thick mist and drizzle. The aircraft was next seen descending out of the mist in a very steep nose down attitude at high speed and it crashed into fir trees close to the side of the lake. The resulting fireball was seen by numerous witnesses. No radio calls were received from XW417 and the pilot was killed on impact having made no attempt to eject.

Cause

3. No evidence was found of a technical malfunction or birdstrike and although severe turbulence and other associated thunderstorm activity were reported in the general area no evidence existed to suggest that such conditions prevailed at the time and place of the accident. The most likely cause of the accident was that the pilot, after pulling-up from low level flight due to extremely poor weather conditions in an area of high ground, became disorientated in cloud and, as a result, lost control of the aircraft.

Subsequent Actions

4. A review to consider the teaching of recovery methods for aircraft in similar circumstances has since been undertaken.