



# MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

## Military Aircraft Accident Summaries

MAAS 9/85

14 May 1985

### AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT INVOLVING ROYAL AIR FORCE JET

#### PROVOST T3A XN 473

|                    |                                   |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Date:              | 15 August 1984                    |
| Parent Airfield:   | RAF Church Fenton                 |
| Place of Accident: | FTS Cranwell                      |
| Crew:              | One instructor, one student pilot |
| Casualties:        | Nil                               |

#### CIRCUMSTANCES

1. On 15 August 1984 an instructor and his student took off in Jet Provost XN 473 for a medium level navigation exercise. Immediately after becoming airborne, at a height of about 20-30 feet, the instructor saw a large flock of small birds directly in front of the aircraft. He raised the aircraft's nose in an attempt to fly over the birds but it became clear that this would not be successful. He therefore elected to avoid them by abandoning the take-off and landing back on the length of runway remaining. He closed the throttle, lowered the nose and, after a short descent, attempted to prepare the aircraft for landing. This was only partially successful and had little effect on the rate of descent. The aircraft hit the runway heavily, bursting both mainwheel tyres and collapsing the nose undercarriage leg. It then continued in a gentle left turn and came to rest almost completely off the runway. Both pilots were unhurt but the aircraft was damaged beyond economic repair as a result of the heavy landing.

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## CAUSES

2. The presence of the flock of birds was the single most important factor contributing to the accident. The instructor was faced with a possible birdstrike and engine failure in a position from which neither an abandoned take-off nor an ejection could have been accomplished safely. He therefore correctly chose to abandon the take-off before he struck the birds and whilst sufficient runway was remaining ahead of him. However, his subsequent decision to close the throttle when the aircraft was at a very low airspeed committed the aircraft to an excessively heavy landing.

## SUBSEQUENT ACTION

3. Appropriate action was taken against the instructor.

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