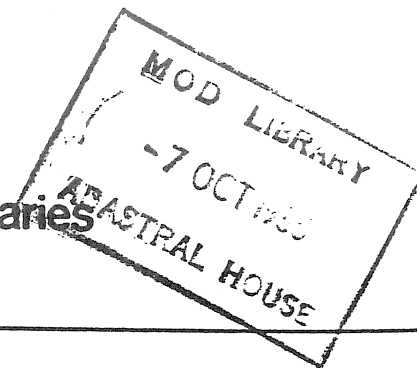




MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

Military Aircraft Accident Summaries



MAAS 21/85

2 October 1985

AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT TO ROYAL AIR FORCE HARRIER GR3 XZ992

Date:	29 November 1984
Parent Airfield:	RAF Stanley, Falkland Islands
Place of Accident:	RAF Stanley
Crew	One pilot
Casualties:	One Major Injury

CIRCUMSTANCES

1. On the afternoon of 29 November 1984, XZ992 was being flown as the No 2 of a pair of Harriers for a simulated airfield attack at RAF Stanley. The aircraft was approaching the airfield at 250 ft and 480 kts when the pilot heard a loud bang and felt a jolt through the airframe. His forward vision was obscured by a red mass which enveloped the front windscreen and quarter-light panels, and there was a marked increase in cockpit noise accompanied by buffeting so severe that he was unable to read his instruments. Although he was briefly able to see out of the canopy, he soon lost all external visual reference and became totally disorientated. Because of his disorientation and his known proximity to the ground, he ejected. The ejection took place at extremely low level with the aircraft in a shallow descending turn over the sea. Although the ejection seat functioned normally, there was insufficient time for the parachute to decelerate the pilot before he hit the sea and he suffered a broken leg, broken arm and dislocated shoulder. He was unable to operate his survival equipment, and

would probably have drowned had it not been for the timely assistance provided by 2 airmen in a Gemini dinghy who had been working nearby, had seen the ejection, and came to the pilot's rescue.

CAUSE

2. The accident was caused by the aircraft hitting a large sea-bird, there was evidence to suggest it was a Southern Giant Petrel, a species of similar size and weight to the Black-browed Albatross. The collision with the bird caused severe airframe damage, denying the pilot both visual and instrument references and thereby forcing him to eject.

SUBSEQUENT ACTION

3. Steps have been taken to counter bird activity in the vicinity of Port Stanley Harbour.

4. Automatic inflation for safety equipment is already being developed and should be introduced into service in the near future.

5. The 2 airmen who rescued the pilot have been awarded the personal commendation of the Commander, British Forces Falkland Islands.

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