



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

Military Aircraft Accident Summary

Aircraft:	Bulldog T1 XX660
Date of accident:	25 March 1985
Parent Airfield:	RAF Abingdon
Place of accident:	4 nms South East of Brize Norton
Crew:	One instructor, one student pilot
Casualties:	1 Fatal

Circumstances

1. During a spinning instruction sortie in Bulldog XX660 a University Air Squadron (UAS) instructor briefed his student to enter a spin to the left and recover at the incipient stage, before the spin had fully developed. The student entered the spin and almost immediately correctly centralised the controls to effect a recovery. Unusually, this had no effect and he therefore took the full spin recovery action which was maintained by the instructor when he took control. Despite these actions the spin continued and, on approaching the pre-calculated abandonment height, the instructor ordered the student to bale out. Both crew members abandoned the aircraft without difficulty, but on parachute deployment the instructor was seen to jerk in his harness and fall away to his death. The student landed unhurt near the aircraft which had continued to spin until it hit the ground in open country and was damaged beyond repair.

Causes

2. The investigation, which included assistance from the AIB, was able to discount technical malfunction as a cause of the accident. From wreckage evidence and from the student's testimony, it was concluded that the aircraft had been in a normal spin and that crew recovery actions had been correct. It was not possible, therefore, to provide a precise cause for the aircraft's failure to recover from the spin. However, it is believed that the initial failure to recover at the incipient stage had been a factor in the subsequent reluctance of the aircraft to recover from the fully developed spin.

3. Examination of the instructor's parachute harness showed it to be fully serviceable but with the quick release fitting (QRF) in the unlocked position. It was considered most likely that, prior to

abandonment, the instructor had mistakenly unlocked his parachute QRF instead of his seat QRF. After abandonment, the QRF could then have been depressed by arm flail consequent upon the shock of parachute opening, thereby releasing the parachute harness.

Subsequent Action

4. In the light of the low spinning accident rate for the Bulldog and of the overwhelming success rate of the recommended recovery action, it was decided to continue Bulldog spinning training in its current form. However, the Central Flying School has been tasked with reviewing the teaching methods of incipient spinning in the light of the possible relationship between XX660's incipient spin behaviour and its failure to recover from the subsequent fully developed spin.

5. QRF paint markings will be revised to allow Bulldog aircrew to identify more readily an unlocked condition.

Claims

6. A claim of £290 was settled in respect of damage to the field in which the aircraft crashed.