



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

Military Aircraft Accident Summaries

7/87

12 June 1987

AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT TO ROYAL AIR FORCE JAGUAR GR1 XZ 388

Date: 1 April 1985
Parent Airfield: RAF Bruggen, Germany
Place of Accident: 10nm North-East of Celle Airfield, Germany
Crew: One
Casualties: One, Major Injury

CIRCUMSTANCES

1. On the morning of 1 April 1985, Jaguar ZX388 was flying as the No 3 of a 3-aircraft formation on a routine training sortie. Following an initial high level transit, the formation prepared for a descent through cloud under radar control to continue with the low-level portion of the sortie. The leader and No 2 descended as a pair, broke cloud at 3000ft in the operating area, and then entered a holding pattern at between 500ft and 1000ft to await the arrival of the No 3. Meanwhile, the No 3 pilot also broke cloud at 3000ft and received radar vector towards the other two aircraft. Shortly afterwards, the pilot of XZ388 received a call from the leader indicating visual contact and instructing him to turn left to rejoin the formation. Some moments later, No 3 saw the leader and No 2 and manoeuvred to join in an extended trail formation. At that point the leader instructed the formation to change to their next radio operating frequency; this frequency

was not one of those on the aircraft's pre select facility and required all 5 digits to be dialled manually. The No 3 pilot looked into the cockpit and began dialling the frequency, but he misdialled the last digit and had to reselect. When he looked up, he saw that his aircraft was in a steep descending turn and extremely close to the ground. Although he rolled the wings level and pulled back on the stick, he realised simultaneously that the aircraft would strike the ground so he pulled the ejection handle. The ejection seat left the aircraft just before, or at, the moment of impact and the pilot survived having sustained compression fractures of 2 vertebrae and an ankle injury. The aircraft continued to slide for a short distance through a sparsely wooded area before disintegrating and catching fire.

CAUSE

The accident was the result of the pilot becoming pre-occupied with changing the radio frequency and allowing his aircraft to assume an overbanked nose-low attitude at low level from which he was unable to recover. Appropriate disciplinary action has been taken.

CLAIMS

Four claims were received from 3 parties, the Local Authority in respect of recovery costs and the Forestry Authority and landowner in respect of damage to trees and land. The total payment amounted to DM 9249 (£3095)

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