



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

Military Aircraft Accident Summary

Aircraft:	Hawk T1 XX293
Date of accident:	17 April 1985
Parent Airfield:	RAF Valley
Place of accident:	RAF Wattisham
Crew:	One Student Pilot
Casualties:	Nil

Circumstances

1. During a short detachment of Hawk aircraft, to take advantage of better weather at RAF Wattisham, a student pilot was briefed on a last-minute change to the flying programme. This required him to fly a second solo sortie instead of the dual flight which had been planned. Following a short lunch break the student carried out a normal engine start and taxi sequence. However, his ground-crew noted that the aircraft's canopy had been left partially open; they indicated this to the student and from his actions they were satisfied that he was aware of the fact.

2. The first part of the aircraft's take-off was normal but, shortly after raising undercarriage and flaps, the student was aware of a sudden noise and a canopy movement. Simultaneously, he sensed the aircraft roll to the left. Being very much aware of his proximity to the ground and sensing that he had lost control, he ejected; this, together with his subsequent short parachute descent, was entirely successful. The abandoned aircraft maintained a left turn until, having completed a full orbit, it descended through power cables and the thatched roof of a cottage before impacting the ground in an adjacent field.

Causes

3. Noting that the aircraft's canopy had departed the aircraft immediately prior to the ejection and supported by the evidence of the groundcrew, it was concluded that the accident had been caused by the student's failure to lock the canopy correctly prior to take-off. His subsequent ejection resulted from the pressure of his limited flying experience, the confusing circumstances at the time and the need for an early ejection decision when so close to the ground. It was noted that the sortie, which resulted from a last-minute change to the flying programme, had infringed fatigue

regulations by requiring the student to fly solo instead of dual on his sixth sortie in 2 days.

Subsequent Actions

4. Canopy locking procedures and warning signals have been improved to more readily alert aircrew and ground crew to an unlocked condition.

5. Appropriate action was taken against the student and the flying supervisors responsible for monitoring his flying. The student has resumed his flying training.

Claims

6. Four claims were received of which three have been settled. The fourth claim has involved the rebuilding of the cottage damaged by the aircraft, this is scheduled to be completed shortly, the cost of the repairs to the cottage and the rent of the nearby cottage in which the family have been temporarily housed will be paid for by the MOD.