



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

Military Aircraft Accident Summaries

2/87

9 February 1987

AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT TO ROYAL AIR FORCE LIGHTNING F6 XS 921

Date: 19 September 1985
Parent Airfield: RAF Binbrook, Lincolnshire
Place of Accident: North Sea, 50 NM East of Flamborough Head
Crew: One
Casualties: One major injury

CIRCUMSTANCES

1. On the 19 September 85 Lightning XS921 was one of a pair engaged in high altitude interception training over the North Sea. As the pilot turned towards base after the final intercept he reported a control malfunction. The control column moved fully left, the aircraft rolled rapidly to the left, and the nose dropped as the aircraft continued rolling. He made several unsuccessful attempts to overcome the malfunction but when the aircraft became inverted for the second time at approximately 20,000 feet, he ejected. The pilot, who suffered major injuries during the ejection, was rescued from the sea 40 minutes later by a search and rescue helicopter.

CAUSE

2. The investigation concluded that the aileron powered flying control units (PFCUs) must have been acting under hydraulic pressure to cause the malfunction experienced by the pilot. There were 2 possible explanations for this malfunction; first, an internal malfunction within one of the 4 aileron PFCUs causing a control run-away; second and most probable, that a loose article from within the aircraft structure jammed one of the aileron PFCU input levers. Unfortunately, despite extensive salvage operations very little wreckage was recovered and it was impossible to determine the precise cause of the accident.

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