



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

Military Aircraft Accident Summaries

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AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT INVOLVING ROYAL AIR FORCE HAWK T1A

AIRCRAFT XX 333 AND XX 340

Date: 26 September 1985

Parent Airfield: RAF Chivenor

Place of Accident: Air Combat Manoeuvring Range, Sardinia

Crew: 1 pilot and 1 supernumerary crew member (XX333)
1 pilot (XX340)

Casualties: 1 major injury and 2 minor injuries

CIRCUMSTANCES

1. As part of a detachment to the NATO base at Decimomannu, Sardinia, 2 Hawk pilots were briefed for air combat training with 2 RAF Phantom aircraft. A pilot from another squadron flew as supernumerary crew in one of the Hawks to gain combat experience. The combat training started in the Air Combat Manoeuvring Range (ACMR) with the 2 Hawk aircraft operating as a co-ordinated pair as briefed. During the ensuing engagements one of the Phantoms, having received a 'kill', departed the immediate combat area for 'rearming'. During this time the 2 Hawks became separated and each then carried out an individual attack on the remaining Phantom without being fully aware of the other's presence. By maintaining a left hand turn behind the Phantom, the pilot of XX 333 unwittingly was belly up to XX 340 whose pilot, also without knowledge of the proximity of his wingman, was manoeuvring behind the Phantom to achieve the same weapons release parameters. Both pilots achieved their simulated weapons release parameters simultaneously and the aircraft collided at a height of 11000 feet.

2. The ensuing explosion and loss of control in each aircraft prompted immediate and successful ejection by all 3 aircrew in the 2 aircraft. After landing in the sea and boarding their dinghies they were soon rescued by Italian Air Force helicopters. The 2 pilots received minor injuries whilst the supernumerary crew member received major back injuries. Both aircraft crashed in the sea and were destroyed.

CAUSE

3. The detailed recorded data from the ACMR, which is fully instrumented, confirmed that both Hawk pilots had completed individual, uncoordinated attacks on the same Phantom, approaching from similar slant ranges but in 2 different dimensions. Throughout their attacks neither pilot was fully aware of the other's presence despite several advisory radio transmissions from the ground controller. They lost situational awareness to the extent that they were unable to recognise the developing collision risk.

SUBSEQUENT ACTIONS

4. Revised instructions on the conduct of air combat training periods have been issued and a comprehensive review of associated aspects has been initiated. Appropriate action has been taken in respect of the two Hawk pilots.

Issued by: Public Relations
Ministry of Defence
Main Building
Whitehall
LONDON
SW1A 2HB

(Royal Air Force) 01-218-3253/3254