



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

Military Aircraft Accident Summaries

18/88

November 29, 1988

AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT TO ROYAL AIR FORCE JAGUAR GR1A XZ386

Date:	24 June 1987
Parent airfield:	RAF Lossiemouth
Place of accident:	3 miles SE of Builth Wells, Wales
Crew:	One
Casualties:	One killed

CIRCUMSTANCES

1. On 24 June 1987, a formation of two Jaguar aircraft (Callsign Tiger 1 and 2), took off from RAF Chivenor to conduct a low level evasion exercise in Wales. They were preceded by another single seat Jaguar, XZ386, which was to act as an attacking enemy aircraft. The sortie was to be similar to one flown successfully the previous day with the same pilot acting as attacker.
2. After 2 uneventful engagements with XZ386, the formation continued the planned route without further contact with the attacker. They turned right around the town of Builth Wells and the lead aircraft, TIGER 1, descended into the valley running SSE from the town. No 2, on the leader's left hand side and slightly behind, was sky-lined above a ridge. Shortly after rolling out of the turn, No 2 lost sight of the lead aircraft because of the terrain. While looking back to his right he saw, at less than 2 nms, a fire which quickly spread through some trees. The formation returned to the scene where they saw aircraft wreckage which was subsequently identified as XZ386.

The pilot had ejected, but too late, for although the seat had functioned correctly it had impacted the ground before completing its operating sequence and the pilot was killed.

CAUSE

3. The evidence of eyewitnesses in the crash area was critical in determining the aircraft's flight path and behaviour prior to impact. It was hypothesised that the pilot of XZ386 had flown along the western side of the Wye Valley to maintain lateral displacement from the formation's track and to enable him to detect the formation by skylining them above high ground to the east of the valley. It was thought that, at some stage after entering the Wye Valley, the pilot saw Tiger 2 above a ridge to the east of the valley, at which stage Tiger 1 would probably have been out of sight due to the terrain. It was concluded that Jaguar XZ386 had probably initiated an engagement on Tiger 2 by turning to starboard but, in doing so, passed close to Tiger 1. By manoeuvring hard to avoid Tiger 1 and to maintain terrain clearance it is possible that the pilot exceeded the aircraft's rapid rolling limitations, thereby inducing wing rock. By this stage the pilot probably recognised the symptoms of an imminent departure from normal flight and, with insufficient height available to effect recovery, abandoned the aircraft.

SUBSEQUENT ACTIONS

4. Height separation criteria for attacks by aggressor aircraft on low level tactical formations have been reviewed.

CLAIMS

5. A total of £1376 has to be paid by the Ministry of Defence in respect of damage to land and associated agents' expenses as a result of this accident.

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