



# MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

## Military Aircraft Accident Summary

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### MILITARY AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT SUMMARY

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### AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT INVOLVING ROYAL AIR FORCE

### HARRIER GR7 ZD349

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Date:	14 January 1994
Parent Airfield:	Royal Air Force Wittering
Place of Accident:	5 nm SE of Evesham, Hereford & Worcester
Crew:	1 Pilot
Casualties:	1 Fatal

### CIRCUMSTANCES

1. On 14th January 1994, a pair of Harrier GR7s were engaged in a Low-Level Sortie. The pilot of the No1 aircraft, ZD349, was a US Marine Corps AV-8B pilot who was undertaking a series of training courses to prepare him for exchange duties with the RAF, flying the Harrier GR7. Leading such a mission was to be the penultimate sortie of his training package. A third Harrier was tasked to provide a simulated fighter threat or 'bounce' and this aircraft had been positioned in an area where the weather was assessed as being suitable for the exercise.

2. The pair followed some 10 minutes later, adopting a standard line-abreast formation, flying approximately 2500 metres apart. The bounce pilot saw the approaching formation and manoeuvred his aircraft for a simulated missile attack from the pair's front right sector. The pilot of the No2 aircraft saw the 'bounce'. However, as the turn continued he allowed the nose of his aircraft to lower progressively. The Harrier GR7 is fitted with a Low Altitude Warner (LAW), which the pilot had set at 250ft. Unfortunately, he did not respond to its audio tone and the Harrier continued to descent, striking the

ground in a 3° dive. The pilot, who did not attempt an ejection, was killed in the crash and the aircraft was destroyed.

#### CAUSE

3. Although an internal cockpit distraction could not definitely be ruled out, the most probable cause of the accident was the pilot's handling of the aircraft, in that he failed to maintain minimum separation distance with the ground. Despite the LAW's audio tones being triggered three seconds prior to impact, there was no discernable attempt to correct the flight path, indicating that the pilot had concentrated on the 'bounce' aircraft to the exclusion of all other instrument indications or sensory cues and was thus unaware of the impending danger.

#### CLAIMS

4. Claims totalling £53,234.44 have been settled to date in respect of this accident.