

**MILITARY AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT SUMMARY**  
**PUBLISHED BY THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE**  
**AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT TO ROYAL AIR FORCE**  
**CHINOOK HC Mk2 ZD576**

Date:	2 June 1994
Parent Station:	RAF Odiham
Place of Accident:	Mull of Kintyre, Strathclyde
Crew:	4 (2 Pilots, 2 Air Loadmasters)
Passengers:	25
Casualties:	All 29 persons on board killed

**CIRCUMSTANCES**

1. On the afternoon of 2nd June 1994, Chinook HC Mk2 ZD576 departed RAF Aldergrove, Co Antrim, on a low-level flight to Fort George, Inverness with four crew and 25 passengers on board. At approximately 1800 hours, after an apparently uneventful, direct transit across the Northern Channel of the Irish Sea, ZD576 crashed into rising terrain on the southern tip of the Mull of Kintyre. Weather conditions in the area were bad with poor visibility and low cloud. The aircraft was destroyed and all 29 persons on board were killed.

**CAUSE**

2. There were no eye witnesses to the crash nor Accident Data Recorder information to assist the Board of Inquiry with its investigation. Nevertheless, there was sufficient evidence to eliminate as possible causes: major technical malfunction or structural failure of the aircraft prior to impact; hostile action; or electromagnetic interference with navigation equipment. Therefore, the Inquiry focused on the crew's handling and operation of the aircraft.

3. The pilots of ZD576 were operating the aircraft under Visual Flight Rules (VFR) at the time of the accident and had sole responsibility for maintaining safe clearance from terrain. Moreover, the Inquiry was able to confirm that, prior to impact, ZD576's navigation equipment had been functioning accurately. The Inquiry, therefore, considered all plausible factors and scenarios which might explain the apparent breakdown in the pilots' awareness of their proximity to the high ground, and their failure to take appropriate action to avoid it. Ultimately however, the Inquiry concluded that none of the possible contributory factors would have been compelling enough to have prevented this experienced flight deck crew from maintaining safe flight, either visually at low-level or, if conditions were below VFR minima, on instruments above Safety Altitude and under Instrument Flight Rules (IFR). The Inquiry therefore concluded that the cause of the accident was that the two pilots had wrongly continued to fly towards the high ground of the Mull of Kintyre below a safe altitude in unsuitable weather conditions. This constituted a failure in their duty to operate the aircraft safely; regrettably therefore, it was concluded that both pilots had been negligent. The two Air Loadmasters were absolved of blame.

#### **SUBSEQUENT ACTIONS**

4. Subsequent analysis concluded that no practical, additional crashworthy design features would have saved any of the persons on board in the circumstances of the accident. A thorough review of training, flying standards and supervision within the RAF Support Helicopter Force has since been carried out; this has not revealed any deficiencies that might have contributed to this accident. It is planned to fit both Accident Data Recorders and Cockpit Voice Recorders to RAF Chinook helicopters in 1997/98.