



# MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

## Military Aircraft Accident Summaries

1/91  
21 January, 1991

### MILITARY AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT SUMMARY

#### AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT TO ROYAL AIR FORCE

##### TORNADO ZD710

Date: 14 September 1989  
Parent Airfield: RAF Bruggen  
Place of Accident: RAF Abingdon  
Crew: Two  
Casualties: 2 Minor

#### CIRCUMSTANCES

1. On 14 Sep 89, a Tornado GR1 took-off from RAF Abingdon; the take-off was normal until 2 seconds after leaving the ground when the aircraft encountered a large flock of birds. The aircraft suffered multiple bird strikes which damaged the engines. The pilot selected maximum power and whilst analysing the extent of the damage, attempted to climb the aircraft away from the ground. One engine was indicating idle while the other was indicating full power, however, both were making unusual banging noises. The pilot attempted to restore power in the idling engine without success. With the aircraft descending through 120 ft agl and the airspeed reducing, the crew ejected. The ejections were successful.

#### CAUSE

2. The dual cause of the accident was the presence of a large number of birds on the runway surface and the ingestion of a large number of these birds into both engines. This resulted in catastrophic failure of the left hand engine and damage to the right causing a significant reduction in thrust. The loss of power led to the aircraft being unable to sustain flight.

SUBSEQUENT ACTIONS

3. The aircraft was totally destroyed in the accident. No new measures could be found to deal with the natural hazard of birds; however, the En-Route Supplement, which provides aircrew with airfield information, has been reviewed to ensure that bird risk warnings are given for all appropriate airfields. Also, the Tornado aircraft emergency check list has been amended to include 'landing gear retraction' to the emergency drills for engine fire and engine failure after take-off. This change should give a longer flight duration and consequently more thinking time for crews who suffer this sort of take-off emergency.

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