

Référence No

CIVIL AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT REPORT

AIRCRAFT : Oxford AS 40 G-AIRZ ENGINES : 2 Cheetah X
NATIONALITY : British
OWNERS AND OPERATORS : Hunting Aerosurveys Limited,
 [REDACTED]
 England.
PILOT : Mr. [REDACTED] - British - Killed.
AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHER : Mr. [REDACTED] - British - Killed.
PLACE OF ACCIDENT : In a wood approximately 2 miles S.E. of Esch,
 Luxembourg.
DATE AND TIME OF ACCIDENT : 18th July, 1952 at approximately 1155 hrs.
 G.M.T.

All times in this report are G.M.T.

1. BRIEF CIRCUMSTANCES

While on a transit flight from England to Klagenfurt, Austria, via Strasbourg carrying supplies and equipment for aerial survey, the aircraft crashed in a wood in South Luxembourg. The two occupants were killed and the aircraft was destroyed. Fire did not break out.

2. THE AIRCRAFT

The aircraft was built in 1943 by Airspeed Limited, Portsmouth, England. Its total flying was 1522 hours. The last 400 hours overhaul was completed on 4th July, 1952, and the time-in-air since that date was approximately 10 hours.

The aircraft was modified and equipped for aerial survey, for which work it was normally used. It was fitted with a VHF transmitter and receiver and a M/F receiver.

The documents of the aircraft were in order, i.e.,

Certificate of Registration : n° 2816

Certificate of Airworthiness : n° R. 971 - valid until 4.12.1952

Carnet de Passages à Douane : n° 21618

Licence to establish wireless station dated 28.3.51.

The engines were built by Armstrong Siddeley Limited, England. The port engine had been completely overhauled and was installed in the aircraft in June, 1952. The starboard had been top overhauled in July, 1952. The running time of each engine between its overhaul and the date of the accident was approximately 10 hours.

A complete blind-flying instrument panel was fitted and was actuated by a vacuum pump on each engine.

3. LOADING

Since this was a private flight a load sheet was not required. It has been ascertained that the total all-up weight of the aircraft at the commencement of the flight was 8,226 lbs.

The maximum all-up weight authorized in the Certificate of Airworthiness is 8,250 lbs.

4. FUEL CONSUMPTION

The fuel consumption as recorded in the Certificate of Airworthiness is 32-35 gals/hr. at 2320 r.p.m. at 4000 ft.

5. THE PILOT

Mr. [REDACTED] was born on 28.7.18 and was an ex-pilot of the Royal Air Force, in which he attained the rank of Flight Lieutenant. His flying log book shows that he had flown a total of approximately 4,000 hours as 1st Pilot, of which 96 were by night and 263 hours as 2nd Pilot, of which 78 were by night. His instrument flying totalled 130 hours and his time in Link Trainer amounted to 55 hours. His flying time as pilot in Oxfords amounted to over 500 hours. Mr. [REDACTED] possessed an Airline Transport Pilot's Licence which was valid until 23.1.52. His licence included rating for the following aircraft :

Auster Variants, Rapide (DH.89A) and Consul (AS.65) in Group 1, and Proctor Variants, Freighter 21 and Prince P. 50 in Group 2.

He also possessed a valid General Flight Radio-Telephony Operator's Licence. Mr. [REDACTED] had been in the employ of Hunting Aerosurveys since March, 1947, and his total flying time with the Company amounted to 1,740 hours.

6. PHOTOGRAPHER

Mr. [REDACTED] was 31 years of age and was employed by Hunting Aerosurveys as an aerial photographer. He had no flying qualification.

7. THE FLIGHT

On the morning of the accident the aircraft left Elstree at 0715 hrs. for Bovingdon to clear customs. At Bovingdon the pilot was briefed by the meteorological officer and the aircraft was refuelled. The main and auxiliary tanks were filled to capacity (156 gallons). No instructions were given to the refueller concerning the two long-range tanks which the aircraft carried but there was evidence that these contained 12,5 gallons making a total quantity of approximately 168,5 gallons of fuel on board the aircraft before take-off from Bovingdon. A flight plan was filed by the pilot at Bovingdon and this indicated that :

- (i) The flight would be in accordance with Visual Flight Rules.
- (ii) The first point of intended landing was Strasbourg.
- (iii) Estimated time to Ostend, 1 hour 15 minutes and from there to Strasbourg, 2 hours.
- (iv) Endurance was 6 hours.
- (v) True air speed was 130 m.p.h.
- (vi) Communication by VHF R/T on 118.1, 119.3, 119.7 and 120.1 mc/s. An M/F receiver was fitted.
- (vii) Alternate aerodromes were Lympne (England) and Reims (France)
- (viii) Actual time of departure was noted as 0840 hrs. G.M.T.

NOTE : The total of flying time of 3 hours 15 minutes made the estimated time of arrival at Strasbourg 1155 hrs.

As stated in the Flight Plan the aircraft took off from Bovingdon at 0840 hrs. Normal departure R/T messages were exchanged with Bovingdon and the pilot was next in communication with Lympne. He reported that he was crossing the coast South of Lympne bound for Strasbourg and requesting that Uxbridge be informed of the aircraft's position and destination since he had not the frequency to contact Uxbridge direct. The pilot was again in communication with Lympne when he reported his position over Boulogne. Lympne acknowledged the receipt of this message at 0945 hrs. and told the pilot "Continue with Continental Control". However, no radio contact was made between the aircraft and any station on the continent and nothing more was known of the aircraft until about 1150 hrs. when

witnesses near Ruselange on the southern border of the State of Luxembourg saw the aircraft flying in a N.W. direction through gaps in the clouds. The aircraft appeared to be maintaining level flight through or above cloud but no reliable estimate of its altitude could be obtained. The sound of the engines suggested to witnesses that one or both was surging spasmodically. The aircraft was then seen to emerge from cloud in a spin, from which partial recovery was made before it disappeared from view over the crest of a treeclad ridge. The sound of a crash was then heard.

8. THE SCENE OF THE ACCIDENT

The aircraft had crashed in a wood 1350 ft. above sea level. Inspection showed that the aircraft had dived into the trees at a shallow angle on a bearing of approximately 310° T and had been disintegrated by impact forces. The wreckage was strewn over a distance of 40 yds. forward of the first point of impact.

Both engines had broken away from their mountings and there was evidence that at least one was under power when the aircraft struck the trees. The propellers were still attached to the engines. The throttle levers were fully forward but the wires guarding the emergency position had not been broken. There was evidence to indicate that the main wheels were retracted and that the flaps were in the up position at the moment of impact. The cockpit had been destroyed and no evidence could be deduced from any of the instruments.

The fuel tanks had been extensively damaged by impact and the fuel supply lines had been torn from the carburettors. There was evidence, however, from witnesses who were first on the scene that there was a strong smell of petrol.

The engines, control cables and control surfaces were inspected and there was no evidence that there had been any mechanical failure of the engines, nor was evidence found of any pre-crash failure of the airframe.

9. THE WEATHER

Flight Forecast for the route Bovingdon - Klagenfurt issued at Bovingdon at 0700 hrs. on 18.7.52. This was given to the pilot at the Briefing in pictorial cross-section as well as in tabular form.

Bovingdon to 5° East

Weather : Cloudy
 Base of low cloud above m.s.l.: 2,500 ft. occ. 1,000 ft.
 Surface Visibility : 12 mls. Loc. 7 mls.
 M.S.L. pressure : 1014 mbs.
 Wind at 5,000 ft. : 270° 18 kts.

5° East - 10° East

Weather : Fair
 Base of cloud above m.s.l. : 4/8 at 6,000 ft.
 Surface visibility : 10 mls. or more.
 M.S.L. pressure : 1016 mbs.
 Wind at 5,000 ft. : 290° 15 kts.

Weather observations made at places close to the track Boulogne-Strasbourg

	<u>Time of Observation</u>	<u>Wind direction + strenght in kts.</u>	<u>Cloud amount, type + height of base in metres</u>	<u>Visibility in kilometres</u>
St. Quentin	0900	270° 12	2/8 st.150, 6/8 sc. 750, 8/8 ac. 2400	20
Luxembourg	1000		5/8 900, 8/8 2700	16
	1100		6/8 1000, 8/8 2700	16
	1200		7/8 1000	22
Metz	0900	270° 12	8/8 sc. 1500	10
	1000	270° 12	3/8 sc. 500, 7/8 sc. 900	15
	1100	260° 10	3/8 sc. 500, 7/8 sc. 1500	15
	1200	270° 14	3/8 sc. 700, 7/8 sc. 1500	16
Nancy	0900	280° 15	8/8 sc. 1800	15
	1000	240° 14	8/8 sc. 1800	15
	1100	260° 10	3/8 cu. 1500, 8/8 sc. 1800	15
	1200	220° 10	4/8 cu. 1500, 8/8 sc. 1800	15
Strasbourg	0900	180° 06	3/8 sc. 1500, 6/8 ac. 2400	20
	1000	270° 10	4/8 1500	20
	1100	210° 10	6/8 1500	20
	1200	280° 8	7/8 sc. 1500	20

10. OBSERVATION

The accident occurred at the time at which the aircraft was due to arrive at Strasbourg and the scene of the accident was approximately 100 miles from Strasbourg and 25 miles on the northern side of the direct track between Boulogne and Strasbourg.

On the available evidence it cannot be stated why the aircraft failed to communicate with Continental ground stations nor what factors were accountable for bringing the aircraft to the point at which it crashed.

11. CAUSE OF THE ACCIDENT

It has not been possible to determine the cause of this accident but it appears that the aircraft dived into a wood while recovering from a spin following loss of control. The cause of the loss of control could not be established.

sgd. [REDACTED]
Ingénieur
Luxembourg
22.2.53.

Vu et accepté comme rapport officiel.

Luxembourg, le mars 1953.

Le Ministre des Transports,

Victor Bodson