



Ministry
of Defence

Navy Command FOI Section
Navy Command Headquarters
MP 1-4, Leach Building
Whale Island
PORTSMOUTH
PO2 8BY

2017-06343

Telephone [REDACTED]
[MOD]: [REDACTED]

Facsimile [MOD]: [REDACTED]

E-mail: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] 20 July 2017

Dear [REDACTED]

Release of Information

Thank you for your correspondence of 3 July 2017 requesting the following information on

'RNAS Culdrose 824 Squadron Sea King crash March 1974. Can you please advise whether the names of the casualties were ever made public and what was the cause of the crash?'

Your enquiry has been considered to be a request for information in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

I can confirm that the department holds the information that you have requested. In response to the first part of your request, I can confirm that whilst the names are in the public domain, they were not released through an official Royal Navy source. With regard to the second part of your request, regarding the cause of the accident, I have attached to this letter a copy of the covering narrative to the Air Accident Investigation Report.

The personal information of the person conducting the Air Accident Investigation has been withheld under section 40(2) of the FOI Act (personal data).

Section 40(2) applies to personal data relating to third parties. The release of personal information relating to other individuals would contravene the principles of the Data Protection Act 1998, namely Principle 1 – personal data shall be processed fairly and lawfully and not unless certain specified conditions are met, and Principle 2 – personal data shall be obtained and processed only for specified and lawful purposes and not further processed in a manner incompatible with the purposes. In this instance, data has been provided for the purposes of the accident investigation and not with the expectation that it would be made public.

If you are not satisfied with this response or you wish to complain about any aspect of the handling of your request, then you should contact me in the first instance. If informal

resolution is not possible and you are still dissatisfied then you may apply for an independent internal review by contacting the Information Rights Compliance Team, Ground Floor, Zone D, MOD Main Building, Whitehall, SW1A 2HB (e-mail CIO-FOI-IR@mod.uk). Please note that any request for an internal review must be made within 40 working days of the date on which the attempt to reach informal resolution has come to an end.

If you remain dissatisfied following an internal review, you may take your complaint to the Information Commissioner under the provisions of Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act. Please note that the Information Commissioner will not investigate your case until the MOD internal review process has been completed. Further details of the role and powers of the Information Commissioner can be found on the Commissioner's website, <http://www.ico.org.uk>.

Yours sincerely

Navy Command Secretariat – FOI Section

~~IN CONFIDENCE~~

Accident Investigation Unit
HMS DAEDALUS
Lee on Solent
PO13 9NY.

R3/74

9 August 1974

REPORT ON INVESTIGATION INTO ACCIDENT TO SEA KING HAS MKL XV 702
OF 824 SQUADRON ON MARCH 21 1974

CREW:	1st PILOT	CAPTAIN K J McDONALD CAF
	2nd PILOT	SUB LIEUT R S JOHNSON RN
	OBSERVER	SUB LIEUT E N WILD RN
	U/C	L/S B J SHARPE D053378K

CIRCUMSTANCES

1. Sea King XV 702 was launched from RN Air Station Culdrose at 2000A on 21 March 1974 for a scheduled 3 hour sortie in Area 5 of Falmouth Bay. The crew had been briefed to carry out a CASEX ZULU. For this exercise XV 702 was to be the 'control' aircraft and simulated 'Sonar' information was to be passed to the aircraft from Culdrose Tower on H/F radio.
2. An alternative exercise of SAR circuits and JUMPEX was briefed to cover the eventuality of communication difficulties on the H/F radio. In the event trouble did occur with H/F communications and after the first 'dip' of the CASEX ZULU the main exercise was abandoned and XV 702 embarked on its alternative exercise.
3. H/F communications were re-established at 2120A and a resumption of the CASEX was ordered by Culdrose operations. The Dip Boss (XV 702 Callsign 054) then re-ordered the execution of the original Air Plan. The crew of the second aircraft (Call sign 050) proceeded toward the briefed datum position and some 2 to 3 minutes later a fireball was sighted in the Coverack area.
4. It was established by aerial reconnaissance that the fire was from a crashed helicopter and by elimination of radio call signs, that it was XV 702 which had crashed.

INVESTIGATION

5. The 'on site' investigation by AIU showed that the aircraft had struck a rock face near the top of the cliff whilst flying on a heading of 007° Magnetic. The main wreckage had come to rest approximately 200 yards from the point of initial impact on a bearing of 005° (M).
6. The bodies of all four crew members were recovered from the aircraft wreckage and Post Mortem examination showed that all had been killed on impact.
7. The wreckage was recovered and transported to Accident Investigation Unit at Lee on Solent for detailed technical investigation, however, the investigation was limited due to the massive structural break up and severe fire damage (Annex A para 11).

~~IN CONFIDENCE~~

8. CONCLUSION

The investigation has revealed no evidence of pre-impact failure of the airframe or engines of XV 702 nor any evidence to suggest a malfunction of the aircraft's navigational equipment.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

There are no technical recommendations arising from this investigation.

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Lieut Cdr RN
Officer in Charge AIU

ENCLOSURES: Investigating Officers' report and photographs

DISTRIBUTION: Adviser on Aircraft Accidents (3)
Flag Officer Naval Air Command
Flag Officer Carriers and Amphibious Ships
Commanding Officer HMS SEAHAWK
Commanding Officer HMS ARK ROYAL
Captain HMS OSPREY
Commanding Officer HMS GANNET
Commanding Officer HMS HERMES
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Commanding Officer 826 Squadron
Commanding Officer 814 Squadron
Commanding Officer 820 Squadron
Commanding Officer 737 Squadron
Commanding Officer 819 Squadron
Commanding Officer 706 Squadron
Flight Safety Centre
Ministry of Defence PE TA (M) DG ENG
Ministry of Defence PE D (RN) A/H
Structures Dept (Accident Section) RAE Farnborough
Institute of Pathology and Tropical Medicine