



## MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

### Military Aircraft Accident Summary

---

|                    |                   |
|--------------------|-------------------|
| Aircraft:          | Harrier GR3 XW769 |
| Date of accident:  | 28 June 1986      |
| Parent Airfield:   | RAF Gutersloh     |
| Place of accident: | Chievres          |
| Crew:              | One               |
| Casualties:        | One killed        |

---

#### Circumstances

1. The pilot of Harrier XW769 was tasked to fly a display at Chievres Air Base in Belgium on 28 June 1986. The display went normally until the final manoeuvre, which involved flying backwards and upwards before descending steeply to land.
2. The aircraft accelerated backwards at a height of 185 feet, and then the aircraft's nose was lowered, as is normal for this manoeuvre, to start a rearward climb. However, instead of continuing to climb, the nose continued to rotate downwards through the vertical and the aircraft crashed upside down. When the aircraft was vertical the pilot ejected, but although the seat fired normally, it left the aircraft in a slightly downward trajectory, killing the pilot.

#### Cause

3. The investigation could not positively determine why this accident occurred. However, the most likely cause was thought to be that the pilot accidentally exceeded the longitudinal control limits for rearward flight, for which there was little documented guidance. Harrier pilots have now been warned about the difficulties involved in this manoeuvre and action has been taken to amend Standing Instructions.

#### Claims

4. Seven claims have been made following this accident and are being settled through the Belgian Ministry of Defence, the total cost has not yet been notified.