



# MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

## Military Aircraft Accident Summaries

9/87

29 July 1987

### AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT TO ROYAL AIR FORCE LIGHTNING F6 XR760

Date: 15 July 1986  
Parent airfield: RAF Binbrook, Lincolnshire  
Place of accident: North Sea, 7 miles north of Whitby  
Crew: One  
Casualties: One slight injury

### CIRCUMSTANCES

1. On 15 July 1986, two Lightning aircraft were conducting interception training under radar control. After a routine air-to-air refuelling with a Victor tanker, the Lightnings were directed towards a pair of aircraft. During the ensuing engagement, the pilot of Lightning XR760 was alerted by the audio attention getters and a fire warning symbol. He carried out the appropriate emergency actions, headed the aircraft out to sea and climbed to 10,000 ft. An inspection by the pilot of the other Lightning confirmed a fire in the aft fuselage of XR760. Shortly afterwards, XR760 experienced undemanded control movements which culminated in the control column seizing in the central position. Realising that he had lost control of the aircraft, the pilot closed the engine throttles and ejected. The aircraft crashed into the North Sea and was destroyed. The pilot parachuted safely into the sea and was rescued a short time later by helicopter.

CAUSE

2. In spite of extensive salvage operations, only a small proportion of the aircraft wreckage was recovered. From the evidence available, it was considered that fuel had probably leaked into the rear hot jet-pipe areas and ignited, starting a fire. This in turn led to loss of control of the aircraft. The cause of the fuel leak has not been determined but it appears that it was probably due to a technical defect.

Issued by: Public Relations  
(Royal Air Force)  
Ministry of Defence  
Main Building  
Whitehall  
London SW1A 2HB  
Tel: 01-218 3253/3254