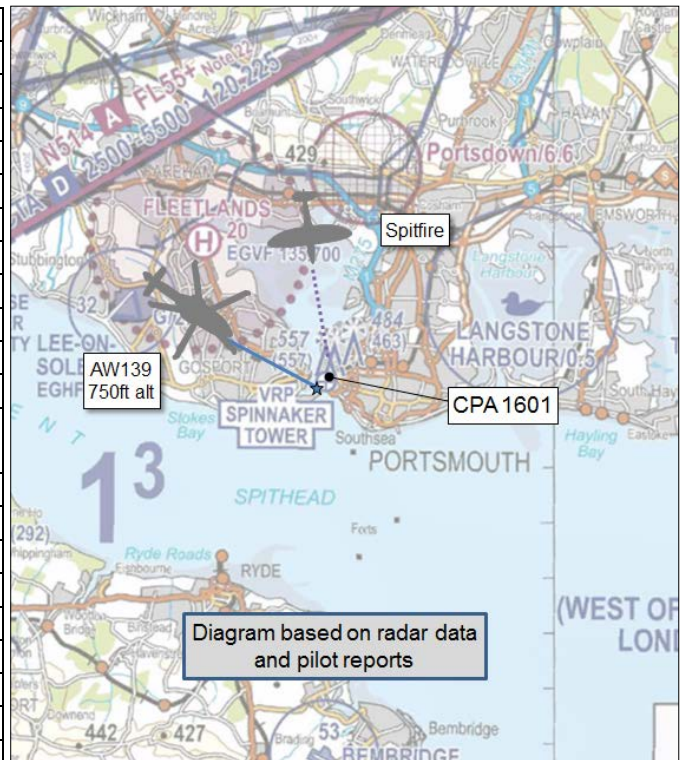


AIRPROX REPORT No 2016151

Date: 26 Jul 2016 Time: 1601Z Position: 5047N 00107W Location: Portsmouth Harbour

PART A: SUMMARY OF INFORMATION REPORTED TO UKAB

Recorded	Aircraft 1	Aircraft 2
Aircraft	AW139	Spitfire
Operator	HEMS	Unknown
Airspace	Lon FIR	Lon FIR
Class	G	G
Rules	VFR	
Service	None	
Provider		
Altitude/FL	500ft	
Transponder	A, C, S	
Reported		
Colours	Red, White	
Lighting	Position, Strobes, Nav	
Conditions	VMC	
Visibility	10km	
Altitude/FL	750ft	
Altimeter	Rad Alt	
Heading	105°	
Speed	132kt	
ACAS/TAS	TCAS I	
Alert	None	
Separation		
Reported	0ft V/150m H	
Recorded	NK	



THE AW139 PILOT reports that he was on a tasking in Portsmouth Harbour, he climbed to 750ft and was accelerating to 140kts when a rear crew member spotted a Spitfire heading from the north, the Gosport area, on a collision course. He took avoiding action by turning steeply right but the Spitfire appeared to gently turn towards him. The AW139 pilot tightened his turn and descended. After carrying out a 360° turn he continued on task and the Spitfire was last seen heading SE.

He assessed the risk of collision as ‘High’.

THE SPITFIRE PILOT could not be traced.

Factual Background

The weather at Southampton was recorded as follows:

METAR EGGH 261620Z 25010KT 220V290 9999 FEW032 SCT040 19/12 Q1021=

Analysis and Investigation

UKAB Secretariat

The AW139 and Spitfire pilots shared an equal responsibility for collision avoidance and not to operate in such proximity to other aircraft as to create a collision hazard¹. If the incident geometry is considered as converging then the Spitfire pilot was required to give way to the AW139².

¹ SERA.3205 Proximity.

² SERA.3210 Right-of-way (c)(2) Converging.

Summary

An Airprox was reported when an AW139 and a Spitfire flew into proximity at 1601 on Tuesday 26th July 2106. The AW139 pilot was operating under VFR in VMC, and not receiving an ATS. The Spitfire pilot could not be traced.

PART B: SUMMARY OF THE BOARD'S DISCUSSIONS

Information available consisted of reports from the AW139 pilot and radar photographs/video recordings.

The Board were disappointed that there was so little information to go on for this Airprox. Although the AW139 had shown clearly on the NATS radars, there was no sign of the Spitfire in that location, and nor did it 'pop-up' to the south-east of the helicopter later. As a result, it had not been possible to trace the pilot, and some members wondered whether the Spitfire could have been a model or a 75% replica with limited reflective radar cross-section (of which there was known to be a few that flew in the area). However, the Board could not be sure that this was the case, and it didn't lesson the danger posed to the AW139 anyway. Assuming that the Spitfire was not a model, both pilots were entitled to operated in this Class G airspace and, although the Spitfire pilot was required to give way to the AW139 on his right, the AW139 did not have priority over other traffic simply as a result of its Coastguard SAR duties. The Board noted that the AW139 had TCAS I fitted but that he did not get an alert; with no sign of the other aircraft on radar, it was assumed that it had not been transponder equipped. Therefore, they concluded that see-and-avoid was the only barrier available to the AW139 pilot, which, through commendable crew team-work, had succeeded in allowing the pilot to take effective avoiding action. Because the Spitfire pilot continued towards the AW139, even after the AW139 pilot had turned away, members concluded that he had probably not been visual with it. The Board therefore concluded that the cause of the Airprox was a late sighting by the AW139 crew, and a probable non-sighting by the Spitfire pilot. Based on the separation reported by the AW139 pilot (150m), and the fact that he had had to turn steeply right and then tighten his turn further, the Board assessed the risk as Category B, safety had been much reduced below the norm.

PART C: ASSESSMENT OF CAUSE AND RISK

Cause: A late sighting by the AW139 crew and a probable non-sighting by the Spitfire pilot.

Degree of Risk: B.