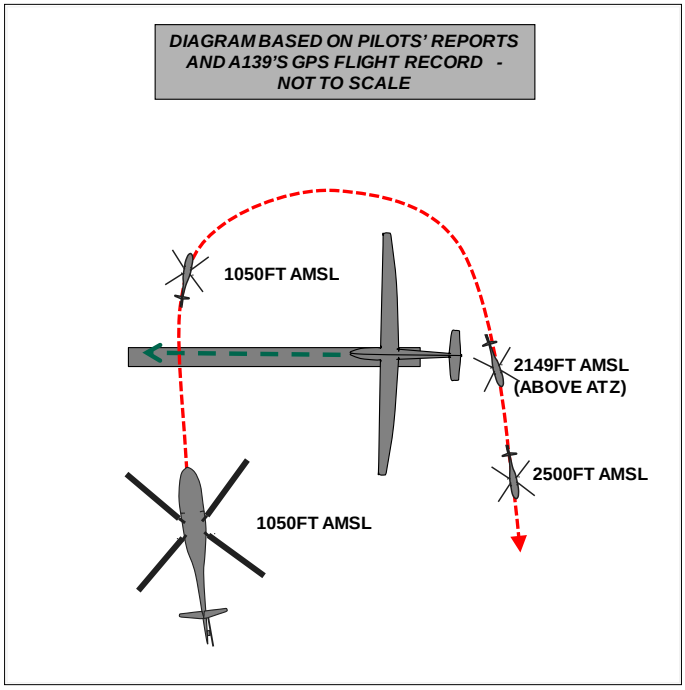
AIRPROX REPORT No 2011061

Date/Time: 19 Jun 2011 1355Z (Sunday)

Position: 5101N 00238W (RNAS Yeovilton - elev 75ft)

Airspace: ATZ (*Class: G*)

	Reporting Ac	*Reported Ac*
Type:	SZD-50 Glider	AW139
Operator:	Civ Club	NK
Alt/FL:	500ft (QFE NK)	NK NK
Weather:	VMC CLBC	VMC CLBC
Visibility:	>5nm	10km
Reported Separation:	500ft V/0.5nm H	NK
Recorded Separation:	Est 800ft V/NR H	



PART A: SUMMARY OF INFORMATION REPORTED TO UKAB

THE PUCHACZ GLIDER PILOT reports flying the second of two check flights for the handling pilot in a white glider listening out on the [unmanned] TWR VHF frequency [120.8]. The ac was launched by wire auto-tow from RW27 and they were in the initial climb at about 300ft and 55kt when the instructor aborted the launch to simulate a launch failure/cable break. As the handling pilot lowered the nose of the glider a red and white helicopter was seen in their 11 o'clock position heading slightly towards them, crossing from L to R. The instructor took control and commenced a descent to land straight ahead. The helicopter maintained its height of about 1500ft and turned about 030° left crossing ahead of them before turning R on the N side of airfield over the technical site. Thereafter, the helicopter turned R and flew away from the airfield to the SE.

Glider control on the ground reported that they saw the helicopter enter the circuit area from the SW crossing over the threshold of RW09 before turning R to the N of the airfield and R again and depart to the SE.

He thought that the other ac was an AW139, possibly Coastguard.

He discussed the incident on the ground and the CFI reported it to Commander Flying, assessing the risk to be Medium.

THE AW139 PILOT reports that they were scrambled by ARCC Kinloss and were en–route from Portland to the site of a helicopter crash S of Glastonbury, heading 344° at 157 kt, squawking 0023 with Modes C and S; TCAS was fitted.

They made a blind call on Yeovilton Radar frequency 127.35 transiting the airfield S to N but no response from any other station was heard. No ac were seen in the vicinity although there was TCAS activity to the N of Yeovilton, presumably in the vicinity of the helicopter crash site, caused by other rescue helicopters at the scene.

Prior to arrival at Glastonbury, they were stood down to return to base as other helicopter rescue assets were already at the scene so he reversed course to RTB.

They provided information from their 'Skytrac' system showing altitude track and speed heading towards Glastonbury and return to Portland. At the time of the reported incident, (1355) the A139 was tracking 166° at 3199ft in the climb to FL55 on their return to Portland in good VMC conditions.

If this was an accurate time then the pilot recalls discussing a TCAS return with the crew and asking that they maintain a good lookout; however, there was no relative height information associated with it and with clear skies above and broken cloud below it was not considered a threat.

UKAB Note (1): Yeovilton is promulgated in the UKAIP ENR 2-2-2-5 as an ATZ (Government Aerodrome 2.5nm up to 2075ft amsl) and is active H24. The ANO, RoA 45 (1), (2) and (3) require that:

> 'If the aerodrome has an air traffic control unit the commander shall obtain the permission of the air traffic control unit to enable the flight to be conducted safely within the zone'.

UKAB Note (2): Yeovilton is promulgated in the UKAIP ENR 5-5-1-7 as a glider launch site (winch ground tow and tug aircraft/motor glider) HJ listed up to 2000ft aal (2075ft).

UKAB Note (3): The recording of their flight data helpfully provided by the A139 crew shows the helicopter turning right to RTB almost over Yeovilton airfield at 1352 and commence a slow climb from 1000ft amsl to FL55. This correlates with the respective pilots' description of events but the incident is not shown on the radar recordings.

HQ Navy Command at the time of this Airprox the ATC Tower at RNAS Yeovilton was closed and unmanned, although the airfield is often open for operational flying during periods over a weekend. Yeovilton has an active Gliding Club which takes every opportunity to conduct glider flying whilst the airfield is closed and has been doing so for many years. Yeovilton Gliding Club Orders dictate that they must listen out on the ATC Tower frequency in order to deconflict their activity with station flying and that of the Yeovilton Flying Club (civil registered light aircraft) which also operates whilst the airfield is closed. Glider control is not required in local orders to monitor the LARS frequency (127.35) and would anticipate any ac wishing to penetrate the ATZ to call on the Tower frequency.

PART B: SUMMARY OF THE BOARD'S DISCUSSIONS

Information available included reports from the pilots of both ac, radar recordings, and the A139 route data log.

The Gliding Member pointed out that it was very fortunate that the glider instructor had decided that the flight should consist of a simulated cable break drill early in the launch sequence from a low height, requiring a landing straight ahead. Since this was the case, the glider was separated vertically from the A139 by about 800ft which increased as the helicopter climbed immediately after it was stood down from SAROPS, just to the N of Yeovilton. Notwithstanding this however, Yeovilton is a published and well-known glider launching site and flying across the RW below max cable height is, in normal circumstances, very hazardous for both gliders and 'infringers'. That the A139 flew through the ATZ without clearance, at that stage still deploying to the crash site, was considered less significant by Members than flying over the promulgated and active ground launching glider site, which needlessly placed his ac and therefore his important mission at risk.

Members observed that the purpose of an ATZ is to offer some protection to [fixed wing and rotary] ac operating therein; is not meant to be 'barrier' to other ac and there should be some means of allowing safe penetration by transiting ac. Further, glider sites are not offered ATZ status but are notified in the UKAIP as hazards. It was noted Yeovilton was correctly promulgated in the AIP as a Glider Launch Site but, in common with many other military airfields promulgated as active 'H24', there is no means of allowing ac to transit the ATZ when ATC is closed. Several Members considered this unsatisfactory and unnecessarily restrictive particularly for HEMS/SAR/Police etc. Members also considered that this probably warranted a formal safety recommendation but since the

situation was so complex the Board charged the Director with discussing the problem with the appropriate military and civil agencies with a view to agreeing a resolution; the Director agreed, and undertook to report back to the Board. Further, a Member familiar with emergency helicopter operations observed that, since it is not annotated on charts, there is no quick and easy means of determining whether an ATZ is H24 or not.

[Post Meeting Note: This information is published in the Military En-Route Supplement - 'the Red Book' which is available to non military aviators.]

Members observed that there is a common misapprehension, even among some professional pilots, that if there is no response to a call to ATC requesting an ATZ penetration, that they can then fly through the ATZ assuming it to be closed; while this is correct for a MATZ it is not the case for the embedded ATZ which must be avoided if no clearance to enter is obtained. In this case despite that it would have added a few track miles to his otherwise direct flight, Members agreed that the A139 should have avoided the ATZ and by doing so he would also have avoided the glider launch site.

Members observed that had the A139 pilot called on the TWR frequency, which is monitored by glider control, the gliding activity would have been notified to him; however, current procedures for MATZ crossings are that pilots call on the Radar frequency (as printed on VFR charts) and that is what the A139 pilot did.

When considering the degree of risk Members noted that, although potentially serious, in the event there had been more than adequate vertical separation and therefore in their view, no risk of collision.

PART C: ASSESSMENT OF CAUSE AND RISK

Cause: The A139 pilot entered the ATZ without permission and flew through a notified and active glider site below the promulgated height of the launch cable.

Degree of Risk: C.