

AIRPROX REPORT No 2011066

Date/Time: 3 Jul 2011 1626Z (Sunday)

Position: 5229N 00018E
(2nm N Littleport)

Airspace: Lon FIR (Class: G)

Reporting Ac Reported Ac

Type: Ventus Glider OV10 Bronco

Operator: Civ Pte Civ Pte

Alt/FL: 3400ft(see Note (1)) 4000ft
(QFE 1020mb) (QNH 1016mb)

Weather: VMC CLBC VMC CLBC

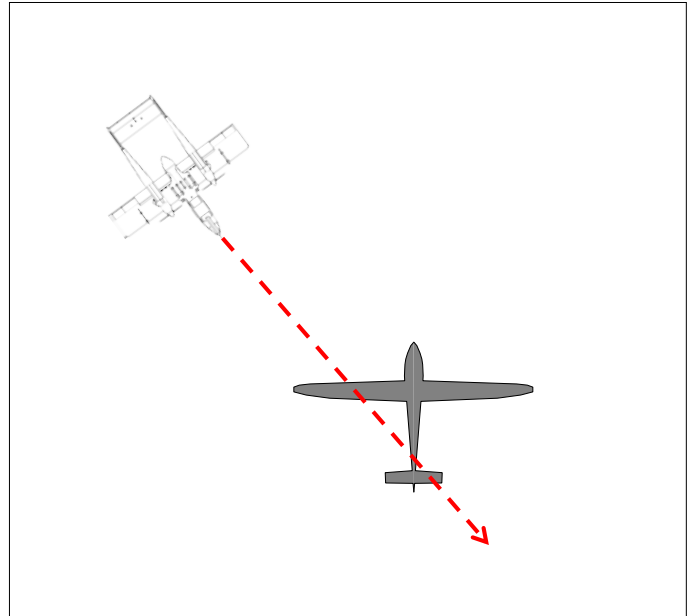
Visibility: 5nm CAVOK

Reported Separation:

0ft V/100ft H NK

Recorded Separation:

NK



PART A: SUMMARY OF INFORMATION REPORTED TO UKAB

THE VENTUS GLIDER PILOT reports soaring at 50kt on the Marham QFE of 1020mb [see UKAB Note (1)] in dark, overcast conditions in a white glider with no SSR fitted but listening out on Marham Ground when he saw a dark camouflage green, twin tail boom Bronco type ac with day glo panels, ½ nm away and approaching him. He rocked the wings of his ac to attract attention of the other pilot and then flew away from the other ac.

He assessed the risk as high and reported the incident to Lakenheath Radar.

UKAB Note (1): The Marham METAR was:

EGYM 031550Z 08004K 9999 BKN050 /// 23/11 1017mb

THE OV10 BRONCO PILOT reports during the cruise from Waddington to Kortrijk, 400ft below cloud at 4000ft, on the Lakenheath QNH of 1016mb and in receipt of a BS from Lakenheath Radar when he heard a glider pilot report that he had an Airprox with an ac fitting the description of his OV10 Bronco (twin boom with orange tips) reported to them. At the time of the incident he was heading 135° at 200kt at an alt of 4000ft, the glider pilot reported that he was at a height of 4700ft and that his ac had passed 100m away.

He did not see the glider despite that the visibility was unlimited, probably due to their vertical and lateral separation.

The pilot opined that while his Bronco is highly conspicuous, gliders are usually not, being white and with narrow fuselages and wings. Nevertheless a good look out in VMC had been maintained throughout and he thought that the reason that the glider was not seen could be attributed to: the vertical separation of at least 700ft; lateral separation (est at 100m by glider pilot); low conspicuity of glider ac in general.

THE LAKENHEATH RADAR CONTROLLER reports that the controller on duty was initially confused about which ac the glider pilot was referring to and at one point the glider pilot attempted to talk to

the OV10. The controller thought an aircraft callsign XXX may have been the one the glider was referring to but it turned out not to be the case. In any event, the transcript is somewhat vague but the RT tapes were retained should they be required.

UKAB Note (2): A transcript of the Lakenheath RT was provided but it showed that, although there were several primary only contacts in the area, the glider was not identified by the controller. The transcript does, however, show that the glider pilot reported that, at the time of the incident, he was at 4100ft and the OV10 pilot reported level at 4000ft.

UKAB Note (3): The recording of the Debden Radar shows the OV10 squawking 0452 with Modes C and S tracking 140° towards a position 3nm N of Littleport where an intermittent primary only contact disappeared from cover at 1625:38. The OV10 passes through the point at 1626.11 at an alt of 4020ft.

PART B: SUMMARY OF THE BOARD'S DISCUSSIONS

Information available included reports from the pilots of both ac, transcripts of the relevant RT frequencies, radar recordings, and reports from the air traffic controllers involved.

The Board noted that the reporting Ventus pilot's report was less than comprehensive, resulting in some aspects of the geometry of the incident being open to interpretation.

The gliding Member opined that the Ventus pilot could have considered operating on a frequency that would have provided him with more useful information; while Marham Gnd may be their SOP they are not in a position to provide any TI while clearly Lakenheath Radar might have been able to provide him a service and he would have heard other units operating on the same frequency.

Both ac were operating legitimately in Class G airspace where the RoA and the 'See and Avoid' principle apply. The glider pilot saw the Bronco in sufficient time to rock his wings and change direction to fly away from it and thus increase the separation (from the information available Members could not determine what heading he took up). Since the transcript revealed that the glider had entered a thermal immediately after the incident, climbing from 4100ft to 5100ft (Marham – elev 77ft – QFE 1017mb), the Board assumed that the pilot did not take vertical avoidance; the Bronco was at 4000ft (QNH 1016mb). Assuming the reports to be correct, the minimum vertical separation would have been just over 100ft increasing as the glider climbed. The Board agreed that the horizontal separation of 100ft reported by the glider pilot was probably an underestimate bearing in mind that he had time to take effective avoiding action; they could not however agree on an estimate.

A majority of Members considered that the Glider pilot's avoidance had removed any risk of collision.

Apart from the poor light conditions, Members could not explain why the Bronco pilot did not see the glider.

PART C: ASSESSMENT OF CAUSE AND RISK

Cause: A non-sighting by the Bronco pilot.

Degree of Risk: C.