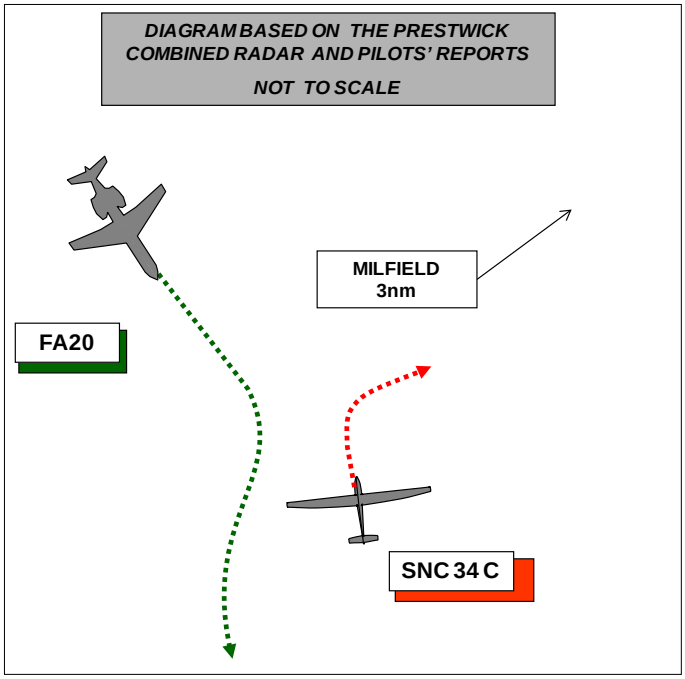
AIRPROX REPORT No 2011143

Date/Time:	19 Oct 2011 1119Z	
Position:	5534N 00208W (3nm SW Milfield)	
Airspace:	Scot FIR	(*Class: G*)
	Reporting Ac	*Reported Ac*
Type:	FA20	SNC34C Glider
Operator:	Civ Comm	Civ Club
Alt/FL:	2500ft QNH (1007mb)	2500ft QFE (1004mb)
Weather:	VMC CLBC	VMC
Visibility:	>10km	50km
Reported Separation:	0ft V/600ft H	<300ft V/300ft H
Recorded Separation:	NK	



PART A: SUMMARY OF INFORMATION REPORTED TO UKAB

THE FA20 PILOT reports flying a dark blue ac as No 2 of a pair of ac, operating under VFR with all external lights switched on, on an exercise support sortie in receipt of a BS from a tactical unit squawking as directed with Modes C and S; TCAS 2 was fitted. He was to the W of Milfield Gliding Site, heading 152° at 310kt in a descent from 2800ft when, passing 2500ft (QNH), he saw a white glider about ¾nm away just left of 12 o'clock, in a right turn having just started to turn to the E from a reciprocal heading onto his heading (150°). He initiated a hard 2·5g climbing turn to the right to avoid it and estimated the glider passed about 200yd to his E; if he had not manoeuvred the distance would have been much less.

He assessed the risk as being high and reported the incident immediately on the frequency in use and backed it up with a written report on landing.

THE SNC34C ALLIANCE GLIDER PILOT reports flying a white high performance glider with no SSR fitted but listening out on a VHF gliding frequency. He had just rolled out of a left turn and was flying wings level heading 360° at 55kt when he noticed a black dot in the distance; by the time he realised it was a jet [dark blue FA20] he only had time to roll right (about 10sec). The jet was almost at the same height and on a reciprocal heading; its pilot also saw him at about the same time and rolled right.

He reported the incident to the club by radio and to ScACC duty Supervisor on landing, assessing the risk as being high.

He assessed the passing distance to be about 100ft vertically and about 200–300ft to his left.

THE GLIDING CLUB commented that they are concerned that the incident took place close to the gliding site in a period of very busy activity. The site is in Class G airspace but within the confines of Military LFA 12.

Cognisant of the constraints of gliding in an area where low flying military fast jet ac are operating the Club has, for a considerable number of years, maintained a close dialogue with the Royal Air Force Low Flying Ops (LF Ops).

When gliding operations are planned on weekdays the LF Ops are notified at least 14 days, but normally some weeks, in advance by telephone and e-mail; LF Ops then disseminate this information on behalf of the Club at an appropriate time to any military stations [and the DA20 operators]. They also operate a separate arrangement where, on an opportunity basis, a specific day's flying can be pre notified with a minimum of 24 hours notice.

Additionally, they were recommended some time ago by the CAA to amend their UK AIP entry to reflect that the site is active 7 days per week dawn/dusk. This recommendation was implemented which meant that ac should be aware of the possibility of gliding activity at the site at any time.

The Club believes that a significant contribution to Flight Safety has been made over a long period by these actions, which have generally worked well and reduced the number of incidents in the area.

The Gliding Club and its members have always been wholly sympathetic to the training and operational requirements of all military operators; however, the above system of communication only works if they pass on details of their operations and aircrew operating in the area read the information published for their benefit .

In this incident the above procedure was carried out by the club and LF Ops was notified of their activity.

UKAB Note (1): This was a routine gliding operation with no competition or associated NOTAM.

RAF BOULMER CONTROLLER reports while conducting a low-level task the FA20 had an 'airmiss' with a glider. The surveillance picture was full of primary clutter and it was impossible to distinguish any primary glider radar returns. There was no NOTAM or any other form of information to inform that there was glider activity in OTA Echo that morning. The FA20 was on a BS throughout the sortie. He had limited radar contact with the FA20, due to the constraints of Brislee Wood Radar. When the FA20 climbed and informed him that he had had an air miss with, he thought, two glider ac, this was the first time that he was aware of any gliding activity

BM SAFETY MANAGEMENT had nothing to add.

UKAB Note (2): Milfield is promulgated in the UKAIP at ENR 5-5-1-4 as a glider launch site (winch ground tow and tug aircraft/motor glider) up to 2000ft agl (site elev 150ft) active HJ.

UKAB Note (3): The radar recordings show only the FA20; the glider does not show at any time. At 1119:30 the FA20 is 3nm SW of Milfield tracking 150° having descended to an alt of 2700ft before climbing again.

PART B: SUMMARY OF THE BOARD'S DISCUSSIONS

Information available included reports from the pilots of both ac, radar recordings, reports from the fighter controller involved and reports from the appropriate ATC authorities.

The Gliding Member briefed the Board that Milfield is a busy gliding site operating training and soaring flights often in mountain wave throughout the year. The glider involved was a 2-seater and not a particularly high performance machine and, due to the position and alt, was most likely on a routine local training flight.

An airline pilot Member questioned the regulations that the FA20 was operating under as it appeared to be flying in excess of 250kt below FL100. It was pointed out that the FA20 was flying a military

support flight under military procedures and regulations (The Manual of Flying Orders for Contractors); as such it was exempt from many parts of the ANO. In this case the FA20 was supporting military intercept training for 2 Typhoon ac and under a BS from RAF Boulmer. However the limitations of this BS are outlined in the Controller's report. Notwithstanding this the ASACS Advisor informed the Board that he would expect controllers to be aware of operations at Milfield although unable to see any non-transponding gliders on their radar picture.

Notwithstanding these factors both ac were operating in the 'see and avoid', environment of Class G airspace. The glider pilot saw the dark shape of the FA20 approaching him some distance away but, due to the relatively high closing speed had limited time to initiate an effective avoidance manoeuvre. The FA20 pilot also saw the glider as early as Members considered reasonable.

That being the case Members agreed that this incident had been a conflict in Class G airspace and both pilots had taken effective avoidance; however due to the relatively small resulting separation, there was an erosion of normally accepted safety margins.

PART C: ASSESSMENT OF CAUSE AND RISK

Cause: A conflict in Class G Airspace resolved by the pilots of both ac.

Degree of Risk: B.