

AIRPROX REPORT No 2010-063

Date/Time: 28 May 0957

Position: 5253N 00331W
(3nm E Lake Bala)

Airspace: Lon FIR (Class: G)
Reporting Ac Reported Ac

Type: Hawk Hawk

Operator: HQ AIR (Trg) HQ AIR (Trg)

Alt/FL: NR 8500ft
(RPS 1014mb) (NK)

Weather: NK CLAC VMC CLAC

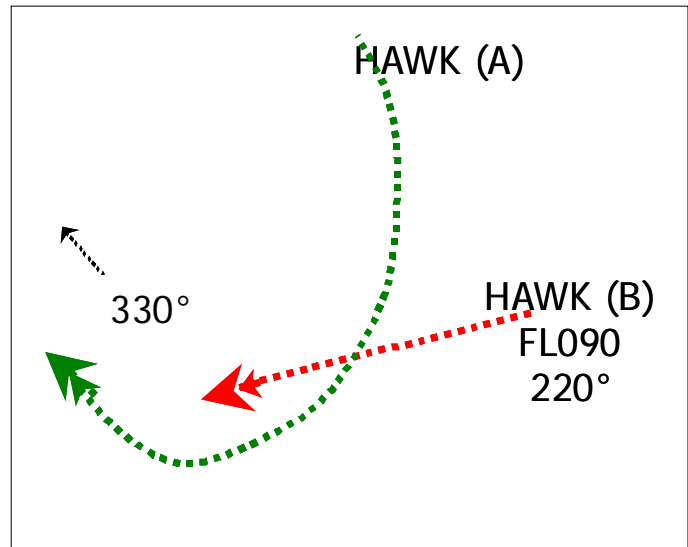
Visibility: 50km 20km

Reported Separation:

Est 200ft V Est 2-300ft V

Recorded Separation:

400ft V/<0.1nm H



PART A: SUMMARY OF INFORMATION REPORTED TO UKAB

THE HAWK PILOT (A) reports flying a black ac on an aerobatics training sortie with HISLs and the nose light switched on, listening on the Valley VHF deconfliction frequency and squawking 7005 [aerobatics]; TCAS was not fitted. While pulling to level at base alt of 7000ft (RPS), during the final quarter of a looping manoeuvre above scattered cloud 3nm East of Lake Bala, using the valley as a reference (track of 150°/330°), another Hawk was seen in their right 4 o'clock about 3000ft above. Shortly after, the other ac [Hawk (B)] made contact with them on the frequency in use to report that they had passed extremely close.

During the post-sortie discussion it emerged that the Airprox had apparently taken place as they bottomed out of a loop and they estimated the miss-distance to be around 200ft. Although they were aware that a 'bounced pair' was operating in the area and saw the pair [low level] about 1 minute previously, they did not see the bounce until after it had passed; they assessed the risk as being high.

THE HAWK PILOT (B) reports flying a black ac as bounce for a 2-ship low level formation with HISLs and the nose light switched on; TCAS was not fitted. After the simulated target run and the last planned bounce of the LL pair, he climbed to medium level in anticipation that the pair would do the same. Prior to his contacting the GCI controller as planned, the LL pair broadcast its intention to re-attack the target so he repositioned over the IP (the W end of Lake Bala) at 8500ft amsl to try to regain visual contact with the pair. Whilst flying straight and level, heading 220° at 300kt but with left wing down so that he could look below, a shadow passed over the ac. On rolling right an ac was seen 1000ft away in his 3 o'clock low position, heading away and recovering from what looked like a looping or dive recovery profile. Contact with the ac was established on the Valley ML common VHF frequency. He assessed the risk as being medium.

UKAB Note (1): Both ac show on the recordings of the Clee Hill and St Annes radars. At 0957 Hawk (B) is squawking 7000 with Mode C after it climbs out from low level 10nm NE of the incident position. It continues flying straight and level, at FL090, tracking 240° towards Hawk (A), which is indicating 7005 (aerobatics) and FL071, from its 0230 becoming 3 o'clock, initially 800ft above. At 0956:20 Hawk (A) commences a pull-up into a loop with Hawk (B) 2nm away in its 0330 at an unchanged level still closing from the left beam. As Hawk (A) reaches the top of the loop at FL148, Hawk (B) is 1.5nm away in its 9 o'clock still closing but now 5600ft below it; Hawk (A) then commences the

descent at 0956:37. At 0956:54 the St Annes Radar (only) shows Hawk (B), at FL090 pass less than 0.1nm behind Hawk (A) at FL086, just before it bottoms out of the loop at 0957:02 at FL072.

HQ AIR (TRG) comments that both crews were concentrating on their tasks perhaps to the point where their lookout was reduced and they did not see each other until after the Airprox had occurred. In this case luck determined the minimum separation distance and safety was not assured. All RAF Valley based aircrew have been reminded of the importance to maintain a balance between task and achieving a good standard of lookout. A review of 'bounce' aircraft maximum holding heights is being conducted to identify changes to prevent a reoccurrence of this Airprox.

PART B: SUMMARY OF THE BOARD'S DISCUSSIONS

Information available included reports from the pilots of both ac, radar recordings and a report from the Hawk operating authority.

The Board noted that both Hawks had been operating legitimately in Class G airspace and had an equal and shared responsibility to see and avoid other ac. Although, due to RAF Valley local warning procedures, the crew of Hawk (A) knew that Hawk (B) was in the general area, neither crew was aware of the close proximity of the other ac until after they had passed the CPA.

Both crews had been in relatively high workload situations and most likely concentrating on the major operational task at the time; Hawk (A) was recovering from a loop and Hawk B crew was looking downwards trying to locate the low-level pair they were 'bouncing' as Hawk (A) approached from above.

Although the separation between the aircraft was not achieved by the positive actions of either crew, it was sufficient to persuade the Board that, while normal safety standards had not been maintained, there was no risk of collision.

PART C: ASSESSMENT OF CAUSE AND RISK

Cause: Effectively non-sightings by both Hawk crews.

Degree of Risk: B.