

AIRPROX REPORT No 2010138

Date/Time: 28 Aug 2010 1039Z (Saturday)

Position: 5111N 00056W (3¼nm
S of Odiham - elev 405ft)

Airspace: London FIR (Class: G)

Reporting Ac Reported Ac

Type: Vigilant T1 MG PA32

Operator: HQ Air (Trg) Civ Pvt

Alt/FL: 2300ft 3400ft
QFE (1006mb) QNH (1021mb)

Weather: VMC NK

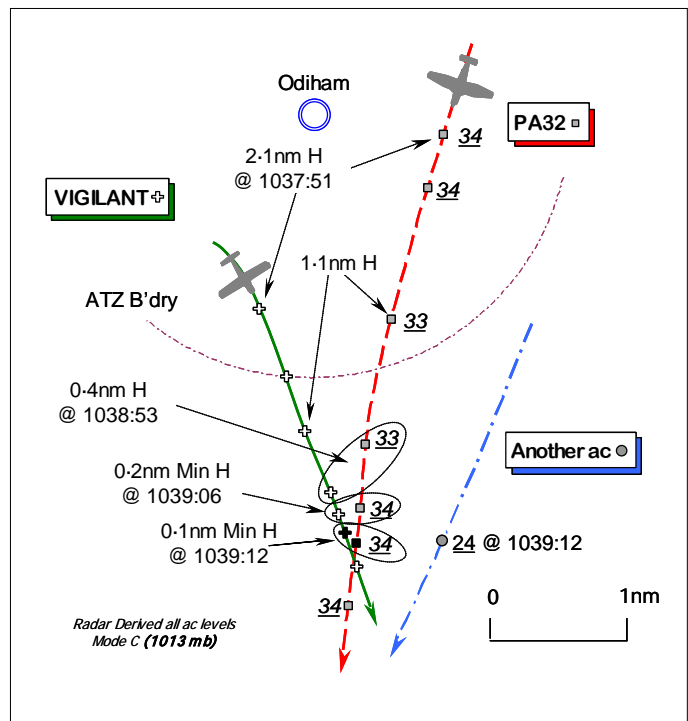
Visibility: 40km NK

Reported Separation:

150ft V/nil H NK

Recorded Separation:

0.1nm H



PART A: SUMMARY OF INFORMATION REPORTED TO UKAB

THE VIGILANT T1 MOTOR GLIDER (MG) PILOT reports that he had departed from Odiham on a local training sortie whilst in communication with Odiham RADIO A/G station on 122.1MHz. A squawk of A3644 was selected; neither Mode C nor Mode S are fitted.

Whilst teaching the lookout scan procedure transiting out of the Odiham MATZ at 60kt, heading 170° in straight and level cruise at 2300ft QFE (1006mb), a low-wing single-engine light ac (LA) coloured dark blue with white decking overtook his glider on a heading of about 180° with minimal separation. The Airprox occurred about 5nm S of Odiham and he estimated the vertical separation was about 150ft as the LA overflew his glider. Due to the close proximity and speed of the LA it was not possible to read its registration but it passed sufficiently close for them to feel its wake.

He added that there was another aeroplane on the same heading which appeared to be about 500ft below the LA's height. This incident was reported to Odiham RADIO on 122.1MHz.

His MG is coloured white with DAY-GLO orange wing panels

THE RAC AT LATCC (MIL) reports that the reported time of the Airprox was given as 1000UTC, at a position 5nm S of Odiham. However, radar recordings did not show any events at this location/time despite the Airprox reportedly occurring in a position of good coverage from the Pease Pottage Radar. To allow for a possible time zone error, radar recordings for 0900Z and 1100Z were examined, but the event was still not seen. The possibility of a whole day error was considered; the radar recording for Sunday 29 Aug was examined for the foregoing timings, but again with no success. Contact was eventually achieved with the reporting pilot who reaffirmed his belief that the date, timings and location he reported for the Airprox were correct. Subsequently, the ATD of the Vigilant was ascertained from the VGS as 1030Z and the ac tracked after its departure from Odiham. This revealed that the Airprox occurred some 3¼nm S of Odiham at 1039Z with an ac squawking A0436, which eventually disappeared from radar in the vicinity of Cherbourg. This ac was subsequently identified as a PA32, which matched the colour-scheme given by the Vigilant pilot.

The PA32 is owned by a syndicate; the pilot flying the aeroplane on the day in question was eventually contacted on 10 Jan 2011, but alas could recall little detail of the flight on 28 Aug 2010 and was not aware of the Airprox. Cognisant that numerous gliders operate in this area, the PA32

pilot said that if he had encountered something unusual, he would have remembered it, having been involved in an Airprox many years ago that he still remembers quite vividly. Unfortunately, therefore, he was unable to provide any further detail.

UKAB Note (1): The UK AIP at ENR 2-2-2-4 promulgates the Odiham ATZ as a circle radius 2nm centred on the longest notified runway 10/28, extending from the surface to 2000ft above the aerodrome elevation of 405ft amsl and active continuously (H24).

UKAB Note (2): The UK AIP at ENR 5-5-1-4 promulgates Odiham Glider Launching Site as active from Sunrise to Sunset (HJ). Launching by Winch and Tug ac may be encountered up to 2500ft above the site elevation of 405ft [2905ft amsl].

UKAB Note (3): At the time of the Airprox, Odiham ATC was closed. Hence, the MATZ was not active. The radar recording shows the Vigilant squawking A3644 (no Mode C fitted) departing from Odiham on a steady SSE'ly course; the ac's reported height of 2300ft QFE (1006mb) equates to an altitude of broadly 2750ft amsl on the extant London QNH (1021mb) and therefore above the ATZ in Class G airspace. The PA32 is shown approaching from the NNE maintaining 3300-3400ft London QNH. The faster PA32 converges with the Vigilant off the latter's port quarter at 3400ft QNH and is shown 0.2nm abeam at 1039:06. The PA32 then starts to draw ahead of the Vigilant, which maintains its course throughout. The CPA of 0.1nm occurs at 1039:12. The third ac mentioned by the reporting pilot maintains 2400ft London QNH – 1000ft below the PA32 – on a steady SSW'ly course throughout.

HQ AIR (TRG) comments that the reported proximity does not correlate precisely with the radar recordings and the PA32 did not directly overfly the glider. However, the miss distance is still within normal minima. Moreover, it appears that the PA32 pilot did not see the glider at all. With the direction of approach of the PA32 being from the rear, the glider pilot had less of a chance of seeing the converging ac and appears not to have been visual until too late to take avoiding action. The Risk of collision must therefore be significant. The need to maintain a lookout scan all around, particularly for a slow ac, is paramount.

PART B: SUMMARY OF THE BOARD'S DISCUSSIONS

Information available included a report from the Vigilant pilot, radar video recordings and comment from the appropriate operating authority.

Unfortunately, through no fault of the PA32 pilot, the protracted tracing action coupled with communication difficulties had denied the Board a timely input from the reported pilot. The Members understood entirely that the PA32 pilot would have been unable to recollect any specific details of his flight so long after the event. However, the recorded radar data shows his PA32 overtaking the Vigilant to port, with the latter reportedly 150ft below his low-wing aeroplane, so it might have been difficult for the PA32 pilot to spot the MG. The Vigilant pilot reported that the PA32 overtook his glider with minimal separation and that he felt its wake. It was not possible for the Board to determine whether the PA32 pilot saw the MG or not, but it seemed improbable that he would have flown this close if he had seen it. The Board could only conclude, therefore, that part of the Cause was an apparent non-sighting by the PA32 pilot. Similarly, the Vigilant pilot would have been unable to see the PA32 easily until it started to draw ahead off his port wing – the radar recording shows this occurred at a range of 0.2nm - and Members noted the Command's sage comments about maintaining an all-round lookout scan. Members agreed unanimously that the other part of the Cause was effectively, a non-sighting by the Vigilant pilot.

Whilst Members did not question the veracity of the Vigilant pilot's account, the radar recording, coupled with his own report, suggested that the vertical separation was somewhat greater than the Vigilant pilot's estimate. His reported transit height was 2300ft QFE (1006mb) and the equivalent altitude broadly 2750ft amsl on the extant London QNH (1021mb). Whilst the tolerance applicable to Mode C of +/-200ft might have placed the PA32 somewhat lower, its indicated altitude of 3400ft as it

drew abeam suggests that vertical separation might have been in the order of 650ft. This was significantly at variance with the Vigilant pilot's minimum separation of 150ft. The Board noted that the other ac seen by the Vigilant pilot that was thought to have been 500ft below the PA32, whereas from that ac's Mode C indications it was actually 1000ft below the PA32. These inconsistencies could not be resolved with certainty because there was no Mode C data from the Vigilant. However, from the information available, the Board concluded that the vertical separation was greater than the reported estimate and that no Risk of a collision had existed.

PART C: ASSESSMENT OF CAUSE AND RISK

Cause: An apparent non-sighting by the PA32 pilot and effectively a non-sighting by the Vigilant pilot.

Degree of Risk: C.