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operations Crew blamed for Habsheim air show A320 crash

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'he crash of an Air France
Airbus A320 at Habsheim on
24 June, 1988 was caused by the
crew putting themselves in a
situation that was beyond their
experience and ability to control
fully say French investigators.
The French Department of
Transport's accident investiga-
tion commission says that the
aircraft was "... in a
flightworthy condition" and that
it found no malfunction of the
aircraft or its equipment which
could have led to a reduction of
safety or an increase in crew
workload. s,,,
The commission points out

that neither pilot had any display
flying experience and that the
pilots had only a short brief for
the flypasts planned at the
airshow. While taxiing out at
Bale, the captain specified his
intention to fly by the show at
100ft in dirty configuration, de-
celerating in level flight to mini-
mum airspeed corresponding to
maximum angle of attack,
stabilise and then apply full
power on the captain's orders to
go around and clean up for a
high-speed pass at 100ft.
The crew was late locating the
airfield and started descent at
10km with the engines at flight

South Korea selects F-18 for F-X fighter programme
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he Republic of South Korea
(RoK) has selected the Mc-
Donnell Douglas F-18 Hornet in
preference to the General
Dynamics F-16 Fighting Falcon
to fill its F-X fighter requirement.
The deal is worth some $4 billion
and was announced on 20
December.
The Defence Ministry says that
both the F-16 (which the RoK
Air Force already operates) and
F-18 met Korea's needs but "the
F-18 could better cope with
threats from advanced North
Korean fighters [MiG-29 Ful-
crums] and is more durable".
The F-18's twin-engine safety

and maritime-attack capability
also scored points with the Kore-
ans. The Korean MoD says: "The
F-16 had lower acquisition and
maintenance costs. However
considering future growth, local
industrial impact and aerospace
industry development, the F-18
is the better choice."
The RoKAF will receive 120
F-18s. McDonnell Douglas will
supply 12 complete aircraft and
kits for 36 to be assembled in
South Korea.by Samsung Aero-
space Industries, which will
build the remaining 72 from
scratch. Final details of the con-
tract and delivery schedule are

being negotiated. The deal still
needs Congressional approval.
The decision by the South
Koreans to opt for the F-18 is
compensation for the loss to
General Dynamics of the FSX
order earlier last year with Japan.
Although the McDonnell Doug-
las deal involves help in the
setting up of a production line in
South Korea, the move is not
expected to be embroiled in the
controversy which has sur-
rounded the transfer of F-16
technology.
McDonnell Douglas is still
supplying F-18s to the US Navy
and Marine Corps. 0

idle and speed reducing; rate of
descent when 100ft was reached
was 600ft/min at time 12h 43min
44s. The aircraft was levelled at
30ft with the engines at flight
idle and the attitude increasing.
The pilot did not have time to
stabilise the angle of attack at the
maximum value he had selected.
Rapid application of full power
occurred between 12h 45min 34s
and 35s, angle of attack was 15°
and speed 122kt. The engine
response was normal. The rear
section of the A320 touched the
trees at 12h 45min 39s and the
aircraft sank slowly and de-
celerated into the forest. A "very
violent" fire broke out immedi-
ately. Three passengers were
unable to leave the cabin and
died in the fire.
The commission says the
cause of the accident was the low
flypast height; slow speed; en-
gines at flight idle and late
application of go-around power.
The commission also believes
that, if the descent below 100ft
was not deliberate, it may have
resulted from poor visual and
aural height information cue
interpretation. Other factors in-
cluded planned crew task shar-
ing being incomplete; neither
pilot had experience of applying
go-around power from flight idle
and late identification of the air-
field led to a rush of events. •

AMX FLIGHT TEST FOR SKYSHARK

The Italian-Brazilian AMX ground-attack aircraft has been used for the first time as a platform for the Skyshark stand-off weapon dispenser. Pictured during recent flight trials, two Skysharks are mounted beneath wing pylons on the aircraft. Aerodynamic envelope and submunition-dispersion-capability /light testing for the dispenser, which is manufactured by the CAMSU consortium (Aeritalia-BPD), have been completed recently using four demonstrators launched from a Tornado. A powered version of Skyshark may be considered as the development programme continues.

Panama combat debut for stealth F-117

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he Lockheed F-117A stealth
fighter-bomber was used in
combat for the first time on 21
December, 1989, during Opera-
tion Just Cause, the US invasion
of Panama.
At least two stealth aircraft
dropped two 1,000kg bombs in a
field outside Panamanian mili-
tary installations at Rio Hado.
The Pentagon says: "The mis-
sion was to bomb a field next to
the 6th and 7th Panamanian De-
fence Force (PDF) infantry
companies, not to bomb the bar-
racks as this would have caused
extensive casualties". US defence
secretary Dick Cheney says that
the objective was to drop the
ordnance close enough to the
barracks to "stun and dis-
orientate" the PDP troops but not
to bomb the barracks themselves.
Troops from the US Rangers

were then parachuted into the
area in a night operation. The
Pentagon says that the landing
zone was "not a hot landing zone
(LZ)" and that therefore the F-
117 mission was successful,
adding: "They hit the target; the
target was the field".
Speculation that the F-117
target was the barrack buildings
has been discounted by the
Pentagon.
The point of origin for the F-
117 Just Cause mission is un-
known, although crews for other
F-117s, deployed from Nevada,
are believed to have been told to
stand by for operations if
required.
Operation Just Cause saw 111
missions flown by US Air Force
Military Airlift Command in the
initial assault, including a total of
84 airdrops. •

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