OPERATIONS: DEFENC E

RAF pilot escapes se< Ten die in Lynx,

Mirage 2000
mid-air collision

T

en French servicemen were
killed when a French Air
Force Dassault Mirage 2000N
bomber and a French Navy
Westland Lynx helicopter col-
lided over the Massif Central on
9 Aprif.
The Lynx, with eight people
on board, from 34 Flotille at
Lanveoc-Poulmic, was on a low-
level training mission. It had
landed at Bordeaux to pick up
some passengers from the frig-
ate De Grasse before continuing
its mission.
The two-seat Mirage 2000N
was from Esc3/4 "Limousin"
based at Istres and was on a
low-level training „ sortie when
the collision occurred in good
weather at 11.30. The Lynx
exploded but the Mirage pilot
managed to keep the aircraft
airborne for another 40km be-
fore it crashed near Lake Mont
Sineyre. The Mirage navigator
ejected but was killed, while the
pilot stayed with the aircraft
and was also killed. •

CASUALTIE S

SOVIET UNION
A Soviet Air Force Mil Mi-8
Hip crashed while on a
search-and-rescue mission in
Hatyu-Tau pass, near Mount
Elbrus, on 4 April. The Hip
had collected passengers
from a civilian tourist heli-
copter which had force-
landed the day before, after
engine failure. All three crew,
three mountain rescue team
members, and a German
tourist were killed.

UNITED KINGDOM

The crash of a Royal Air
Force Wessex HC.2 at RAF

Bishop's Court, Northern Ire-
land, on 27 April 1990 was
caused by the co-pilot mis-
handling the aircraft in a
wingover, and the captain
not taking control in suffi-
cient time to recover. All
three crew escaped with
major injuries after the air-
craft impacted heavily, snap-
ping off the tail.

BY MIKE GAINES

A

Royal Air Force Panavia
Tornado F.3 pilot narrowly
escaped death when he was
partially dragged from his seat
after his ejection-seal drogue
gun was inadvertently fired,
punching a hole in the cockpit
canopy and deploying his para-
chute which tangled around the
aircraft's fin.
In a similar incident in 1987,
Taylor Scott, a British Aerospace
test pilot, was killed when his
seat drogue gun fired the para-
chute through the canopy and
pulled him from the cockpit of
his Harrier GR.5.
The Tornado, operated by the
Operational Conversion Unit at
RAF Coningsby, was a trainer
variant with flying controls in
the rear seat for pilot instruc-
tion — although, on this flight,
the rear cockpit was occupied
by a navigator.
The aircraft was returning to
base after the crew encountered

Kurdish airdi

T

he USA, France and the UK
have started dropping sup-
plies to the Kurdish refugees
trapped on the Turkish-Iraqi
border. Bad weather in the
mountainous area has hampered
the operation.
The US Air Force and the
Royal Air Force are using Lock-
heed C-130 Hercules while the
French Air Force is using C.160
Transalls and one C-130 to par-
achute supplies. The whole op-
eration is co-ordinated by the
USAF from Incirlik AB in Tur-
key. The USAF is also providing
fighter cover from Incirlik with
McDonnell Douglas F-15C Ea-
gles, General Dynamics F-16C
Fighting Falcons and Fairchild
A-10 Thunderbolts, in case the
Iraqis attempt to interfere with
the relief flights.
To help protect Kurdish refu-
gees, the Allied forces declared
on 10 April that they would
shoot at any Iraqi military air-
craft or vehicle found north of
latitude 36° North.
The RAF has also sent three

a breathing problem and de-
cided to select emergency oxy-
gen. To locate his emergency
oxygen handle, the pilot moved
his feet back from the rudder
pedals and his knees away from
the side of the seat. His right leg
felt restricted and he noticed
that his leg-restraint garter and
cord was tangled outboard of
his right knee. While trying to
free the tangle, the pilot acci-
dentally operated the seat's
manual separation lever (MSL).
The drogue gun fired its
piston through the canopy,
dragging the pilot's parachute
with it; the parachute snagged
on the aircraft's fin and partially
collapsed. The pilot, dragged
towards the hole in the canopy,
was only saved by the entangle-
ment around his right knee. As
the MSL operated it had discon-
nected his personal equipment
connector, which connects his
intercom to the aircraft, so he
was unable to communicate.
Using inter-cockpit hand signals

British Army air dispatchers prepare

Boeing Chinook HC.ls to Tur-
key. The Chinooks are ferrying
supplies up into the mountains
from their forward operating
base on the border with Iraq. A
total of five crews have been
sent from RAF Odiham. De-
pending on the weather, up to
26 sorties, delivering more than
120t of supplies, have been
mounted each day since 9 April.
The USAF is dropping its pallet-
ised loads of army rations and

it death
the crew managed to return the
aircraft to Coningsby.
On the approach the snagged
parachute bloomed again, pull-
ing the pilot further from his
seat. The pilot operated the
harness quick-release fitting and
attempted to get out of his
seat/parachute harness. The har-
ness remained trapped however,
and his personal survival pack,
which is normally sat on, be-
came partially upturned.
Despite this, the pilot man-
aged to land the aircraft. As he
did so, the harness assembly
was ripped out of the canopy
hole by the parachute, causing
the pilot to lose directional con-
trol. The navigator took control
and kept the aircraft on the
runway as the pilot selected lift
dump and full reverse thrust.
Later it was found that the
pilot's ejection seat-firing han-
dle had been partially pulled
from its housing. The RAF is
conducting an inquiry into the
incident. D

an RAF Hercules load for drop
bottled water from a minimum
of 4,500ft (1,370m). The
French Air Force is dropping
food, while the RAF is dropping
blankets, sleeping bags and mil-
itary ration packs.
The German Army has sent
six Sikorsky CH-53D Stallions,
and the Air Force two Bell
UH-1D Iroquois, to assist in the
relief effort. US Marine and US
Navy helicopters are also en
route from the 6th Fleet. •

op gathers momentum

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