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RAF Phantom missed hookwire

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THE crash of a Royal Air Force Mc-Donnell Douglas Phantom FGR.2 last year was caused by hydraulic failure.
The pilot of XV436 had recently com-pleted the Phantom conversion course and was gaining further experience on his first squadron, prior to quali-fying as fully operational.
On the night of March 5, 1980, he was practising interceptions when the cabin turbine overspeed caption illuminated on the cockpit warning system panel. While attempting to remedy this failure the pilot operated the wrong lever, which caused the aircraft's utilities hydraulic systems (UHS) to fail. The UHS failure com-mitted the pilot to a Hapless landing. Such a landing is made at higher than normal speed, so the pilot was advised to engage the approach-end hookwire on his return to base at RAF Coningsby, in Lincolnshire. The Phantom's undercarriage was blown down using the emergency air system and the arrester hook deployed as the aircraft was positioned on the glide-path.
There was a lOkt crosswind and 700ft cloudbase, but the Phantom was landed at a satisfactory position, with noi bounce, on the wet runway. The hook did not engage, however, and the aircraft started to veer to the right. The pilot attempted to straighten the landing run, but foot pressure several times greater than normal was needed because of the UHS failure, and the pilot was unable

to stop the Phantom running off the side of the runway at high speed. The crew ejected as the aircraft continued across the airfield, the navi-gator suffering slight back injuries. The aircraft stopped, damaged beyond economical repair, in a neighbouring barley field. The ensuing fire was ex-tinguished quickly by the Coningsby fire team.

Examination of the runway revealed that the arrester hook was in contact with the runway well in advance of the hookwire, but the hook hit the top half of the cable and failed to engage. No definite reason was found for this. The UHS failure, caused by the pilot's wrong selection, resulted in the pilot having to move the rudder manually to maintain direc-tional control. This was not a failure

the pilot had previously experienced. Although an inflight hydraulic failure can be practised in the Phantom simu-lator, the control of the aircraft with-out hydraulics on the ground cannot. As a result of this accident, the Phantom aircrew manual is being amended to re-emphasise the rudder forces needed after hydraulic services are lost. The crew's decision to eject as the aircraft left the runway was correct.

Casualties.•.
• A Japanese Air Self-Defence Force
Beech T-34C of the Hamamatsu air-base rescue flight crashed on March
24. The two crew were killed after the Fuji-built T-34 came down in a mountainous area of central Japan during a rescue exercise.

• A Japanese Air Self-Defence Force
F-104J Starfighter (46 8658) of the 2nd Air Wing was written off at Qhitose airbase, Hokkaido, on April 30. The Starfighter crashed on the approach during heavy rain with a cloudbase of 120m. The pilot was killed.

Casualties...
• San Salvador left-wing guerrilla forces shot down a San Salvador Army Bell UH-1H on May 11. The Huey was hit by machinegun fire and crashed on the slopes of the Cerro Buena Vista range, 20 miles north of San Salvador. The crew escaped.

• An Ethiopian Air Force MiG-21 Fishbed was shot down by Eritrean guerillas on May 16. The pilot ejected safely and was captured by the Eri-treans 50 n.m. south of Asmara. It is thought that an SA-7 was used to down the MiG.

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TAC to automate

attack briefing
SENIOR officers of the US Air Force Tactical Air Command are asking for another $2-8 million to automate
TAC mission tasking control centres. The new equipment is called Com-puter Assisted Force Management System (CAFMS). In the 1981 budget the Service had already been allocated $8-2 million. Air task orders are now prepared manually, but working out the aircraft numbers, fuel, armament, targets, routes, timings and threats is complicated and time consuming. For a major, 300-sortie strike the present system takes between 12 and 14hr.

With computerisation and auto-matic information distribution, the same task couhl be reduced to three

hours. This will give TAC more tactical flexibility, allowing a quick second strike to be set up if needed. TAC will also be able to use its air-

craft to the full, allowing up to three sorties per aircraft a day. An earlier attempt to automate TAC control centres was cancelled after costs rose

and system performance was poor. Some of the earlier software was

salvaged and will be used with new off-the-shelf hardware in CAFMS.

Rapport III starts F-16 trials...
BELGIUM has begun flight testing
Loral's Rapport III internal electronic countermeasures (ECM) system in an
F-16 at Eglin Air Force Base,
Florida. The trials, assisted by the US
Air Force, are expected to last five to six months. Rapport III will be put through its paces against a variety of threats on the Eglin AFB electronic warfare range.
Loral claims that Rapport III is the first ECM system to integrate passive and active roles—detecting and iden-tifying the threat and then transmit-ting the jamming signal. Possible threats include radar, infrared and laser-based detection systems. Rap-port III is reprogrammable on the ground to meet new threats.
Production deliveries to the Bel-

gian Air Force are to begin 18 months after flight trials are completed. Not all of the Service's 116 F-16s will receive the internal ECM system, as some aircraft are reserved for train-ing (see Flight, March 21, page 796). Deliveries will be complete by early 1985 and the order is worth $75 million at 1979 prices.
Israel has placed an order worth $78 million for Rapport III systems to equip some of the 75 F-16s on order. Loral is to team with Racal-Decca to propose Rapport III for the Royal Air Force Harrier replacement, either the AV-8B or GR.5(K). Bids will be invited in July. Plans to equip Jaguars with internal ECM are now apparently a lower priority than the Harrier fit.

. . .while Dutch F-16 flies reconnaissance pod

A Royal Netherlands
Air Force F-16 is
testing the Oldelft
Orpheus reconnais-
sance pod previously
carried by F-I04s.
The pod contains five
frame cameras and
an infrared line-
scanner