

Bascombe Down (UK) Crash in Air Forces Monthly

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 Subject: Bascombe Down (UK) Crash in Air Forces Monthly

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Refers to the March 1997 issue of Air Forces Monthly, a UK aviation magazine that may also be available in the US.

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The Truth is Out Discover the truth behind the mystery crash two and a half years ago at Boscombe Down, the MOD's top secret flight test centre. <Picture>

In 1994 an unidentified aircraft crashed at Britain's top secret test establishment at Boscombe Down. The story behind this incident is now revealed.

The Truth is Out

What is the truth behind the mystery crash at Boscombe Down, the Ministry of Defence's top secret flight test centre, two and a half year ago. Ren Hoek and Marco P Van der Valk can now reveal the facts.

THE MINISTRY OF Defence would have you believe that nothing untoward occurred at Boscombe Down, Wiltshire on the night of September 26, 1994. But something sinister did happen at the airfield that night. The fact that the incident involved the USA's most highly-classified black project aircraft helps to explain the scale (and to some extent the subtlety) of the disinformation campaign which ensued.

The story had begun to unfold on that windswept night as the aircraft began its take-off run along Runway 23. Whatever happened in the few seconds following application of take-off power was sufficiently catastrophic for the two American crew members to abort departure immediately. Military controllers at the London Air Traffic Control Centre (LATCC) were alerted either directly or indirectly to the fact that a serious incident had occurred, and that the runway was blocked. Later that night, the stranded aircraft was seen by at least one witness near the eastern end of Boscombe Down's Runway 23. A tarpaulin-covered frame had already been erected above the aircraft's forward section, around which were a number of emergency vehicles. The rear section appeared unnaturally elevated by virtue of an apparent nose wheel collapse, the only clearly definable characteristic being inward canting twin fins.

Early the next day, an Army Air Corps Agusta Al09 transited to Boscombe Down from Bournemouth-Hurn. All four of these helicopters are exclusively operated by the SAS (Special Air Service), which has a base at Poole, near Hurn. Is it possible that a covert sealing-off operation was set in motion? It has also been suggested that at least one RAF Chinook was scrambled from Odiham to Boscombe Down late that night for just that purpose.

The aftermath On September 28, the DRA retired one of its remaining Buccaneers, XV344, ironically nicknamed Nightbird. Though unremarkable in itself, this occasion afforded an unexpected opportunity... As the Buccaneer was towed out of the DRA/DTEO hangar on Boscombe Down's north side, and before the hangar doors were hastily shut, the incident aircraft was seen in the forward left hand corner of the hangar, which is not visible from the normal viewing area a short distance beyond the threshold of Runway 23. The entire centre section was covered by tarpaulin, but both the front and rear of the aircraft were visible.

The most prominent features were the inward canting twin fins and chines extending rearwards from the nose. The canopy was open and particularly noticeable because it was hinged at the front and not the rear. The aircraft was large fighter size, and was painted charcoal grey. Continued... for full report read the March 1997 issue of AirForces Monthly.

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