No: 5/84

Ref: EW/E23

Aircraft type and registration:

Reims Cessna F150M G-BFEL (light single engined fixed wing aircraft)

b) Fairchild A10 Thunderbolt A10-A0180 (twin engined, fixed wing

ground attack aircraft)

Year of manufacture:

a) 1977 b) 1980

Date and time (GMT):

29 February 1984 at 1527 hrs

Location:

Nr. Hardwick, Norfolk

Type of flight:

a) Private, trainingb) Military, training

Persons on board:

Crew - a) 1

Passengers - a) Nil

ь) 1

b) Nil

Injuries:

Crew - a) 1 (fatal) Passengers - N/A

b) Nil

N/A

Nature of damage:

a) Aircraft destroyed

b) Serious damage to fuselage and right wing

Commander's Licence:

a) Student Pilot

b) Military Pilot

Commander's Age:

a) 33 years

b) 28 years

Commander's total flying

experience:

a) 29 hours, all on type

b) 1086 hours (of which 585 were on type)

The student pilot took-off from Norwich Airport at 1515 hrs to fly his first solo cross country flight from Norwich to Diss, then to Southwold and return to Norwich. At 1524 hrs he reported his position as "just south of Hethel, heading 150°, at 1500 ft ..." The A10 pilot took-off from RAF Woodbridge Suffolk at 1522 hrs as the leader of a flight of two aircraft. Their intention was to fly at 1000 ft agl at a speed of 270 kts to an east coast range for weapon delivery practice. At 1527 hrs, during a time that the A10 pilot states that he was looking down into his cockpit to change the frequency of the UHF radio, the two aircraft collided. The subsequent wreckage examination indicated that the Cessna pilot had been taking nose-down avoiding action at the moment of collision.

The empennage of the Cessna became separated and the fuselage dived vertically into the ground. The pilot died in the ground impact.

The A10 suffered damage to the forward fuselage and right mainplane with superficial damage to the right engine cowling and tailplane. The pilot was able to maintain full control of the aircraft and, after transmitting a "Mayday" message flew to RAF Woodbridge where he landed safely.

The Cessna 150 was coloured white and pale blue; it could not be established whether its anticollision light had been operating. The A10 was painted a camouflage dark olive colour and strobe lights were in use.

The weather conditions at the time were 7-8 oktas of strato-cumulus cloud based at 1700-2200 ft with a visibility of 4-8km in hazy conditions.

The Chief Inspector of Accidents has ordered an Inspector's Investigation under the Air Navigation (Investigation of Combined Military and Civil Air Accidents) Regulations, 1969.