

AIRPROX REPORT No 2010155

Date/Time: 6 Oct 2010 1501Z

Position: 5641N 00230W (3nm SW Montrose)

Airspace: SFIR (Class: G)

Reporting Ac Reported Ac

Type: PA28 GR4

Operator: Civ Trg HQ AIR (OPS)

Alt/FL: 2000ft NR
(QNH) (RPS)

Weather: VMC CLBC VMC NR

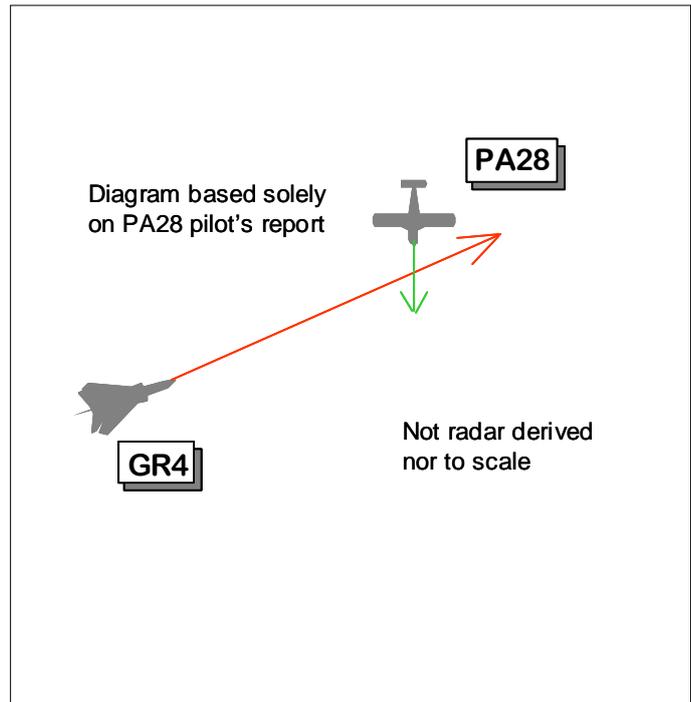
Visibility: >10km NR

Reported Separation:

150ft V Not seen

Recorded Separation:

NR



PART A: SUMMARY OF INFORMATION REPORTED TO UKAB

THE PA28 PILOT reports flying a dual training sortie from Dundee, VFR and in receipt of a BS from Dundee on 122.9MHz, squawking 7000 with Mode C. The visibility was >10km flying 1000ft below cloud in VMC and the ac was coloured white with black/red/blue stripes; nav, landing and strobe lights were all switched on. Whilst in the area close to Kinnell [disused aerodrome 7nm SW of Montrose] at 2000ft QNH he rolled out from a L turn onto heading 180° at 100kt and saw a Tornado GR4 at the same level in his 2 o'clock range 1-1.5nm closing quickly on a crossing track. He took control and initiated an avoiding action descent, levelling at 1400ft after the traffic had passed about 100-150ft above. The GR4 was remaining constant in the window initially until the avoiding action was taken. He assessed the risk as high.

THE GR4 PILOT reports being made aware of the Airprox 6 weeks post incident. At the time he was leading a formation of 2 ac on a pairs low-level conversion sortie. None of the formation members reported seeing any light ac in the vicinity of Montrose where the Airprox occurred. The formation did route through the area autonomously, operating at 250ft MSD although they routinely climb to 1000ft agl when crossing coasts.

UKAB Note (1): The GR4 was traced by the RAC but the pilot involved was away on exercise, which led to the delay in completing a report.

ATSI reports that the Airprox was reported by the pilot of a PA28 and occurred at 1500 UTC, in Class G airspace, at a position reported as 6nm to the SSE of Montrose.

The pilot of the PA28 reported being in receipt of a BS from Dundee Tower. Dundee ATC were operating combined Tower and Approach control positions without the aid of surveillance equipment. METAR EGPN 061450Z 23018KT 9999 -SHRA FEW030 SCT045 13/09 Q0997=

The PA28 was operating from Dundee airport on a local VFR flight to the E of the airfield and before departure was passed QNH & QFE 997 and advised that Danger Area D604 was active up to 2000ft. The PA28 departed from Dundee RW27 at 1431 and was in receipt of a BS. The Manual of Air Traffic Services Part 1, Section 1, Chapter 11, Page 4, Paragraph 3.1.1, states:

'A Basic Service is an ATS provided for the purpose of giving advice and information useful for the safe and efficient conduct of flights. This may include weather information, changes of serviceability of facilities, conditions at aerodromes, general airspace activity information, and any other information likely to affect safety. The avoidance of other traffic is solely the pilot's responsibility.'

The ATSU were not immediately aware that an Airprox had occurred and no RT reports were made by the pilot of the PA28. At 1520:25 the PA28 pilot called Dundee Tower and requested rejoin. The PA28 landed on RW27 at 1531.

HQ AIR (OPS) comments that without comprehensive radar coverage and any knowledge of the incident by the GR4 the actual separation is hard to assess. There are known limitations with see and avoid operations in Class G airspace and this may well be another example where 2 ac came quite close without both being visual. As the PA28 was squawking the fitment of a CWS to the GR4 could have improved situational awareness and separation.

UKAB Note (2): The radar recording for the period does not capture the Airprox owing to poor radar coverage. From 1450-1458 a 7000 squawk is seen manoeuvring between Kinnell disused aerodrome, the coast to the E and Montrose to the N. This is believed to be the PA28, its Mode C indicating a maximum of FL037 (approximately 3200ft QNH 997mb) and a minimum of FL024 (1900ft QNH). During the same period a 7001 squawk, the GR4 Lead ac, and an intermittent primary only return are seen manoeuvring off-shore, well to the SE of the PA28, the 7001 squawk showing a similar height band. Then between 1458 and 1501 the PA28 manoeuvres between FL026 and FL024, turning on a S'yly track before fading from radar. Meanwhile the GR4 lead ac tracks NWly before fading as it coasts in, Mode C showing FL019 (1400ft QNH) on track to pass about 4nm S of the PA28. A primary only return pops up 6nm astern of the GR4 Lead ac also tracking NW but fades 40sec later 3nm before the coast. Just over 1min later the PA28 reappears level at FL025 (2000ft QNH) manoeuvring to the E of Kinnell disused aerodrome before fading again 1min later tracking NW. Twenty seconds later the GR4 Lead ac reappears, 2nm NW of the position where the PA28 faded, tracking SE climbing through FL022 (1700ft QNH) before coasting out and turning NW'ly and changing to a Scottish Mil assigned code at FL50.

PART B: SUMMARY OF THE BOARD'S DISCUSSIONS

Information available included reports from the pilots of both ac, transcripts of the relevant RT frequencies, radar video recordings, reports from the air traffic controllers involved and reports from the appropriate ATC and operating authorities.

Members could add little to this incident. The radar recording shows the 2 GR4s operating off-shore before turning towards the Kinnell area and descending; however, neither of the subject ac show at the same time to capture the incident. As the Airprox occurred in Class G airspace, both crews were responsible for maintaining their own separation from other ac through 'see and avoid'. The PA28 instructor had seen a single GR4 approaching 1-1.5nm and taken action; however, the GR4 crew did not recall seeing a light ac in the area and Members agreed that it was this non-sighting that had caused the Airprox.

Turning to risk, the PA28 instructor had limited options open to him to avoid the GR4, owing to the limited performance compared with the fast moving jet. He had elected to descend, estimating the GR4 passed 100-150ft above, and his presence had gone unnoticed by its crew. Taking these elements into account, the Board concluded that safety had been compromised during this incident.

PART C: ASSESSMENT OF CAUSE AND RISK

Cause: A non-sighting by the GR4 crew.

Degree of Risk: B.