

Chicklade

'Black Boxes' Tell Why Jetliner Crashed

LONDON (UPI) – The British Aircraft Corporation (BAC) has announced that the crash of the new British BAC-111 was caused by a technical fault that left ace test pilot Mike Lithgow powerless to avert the fatal disaster.

Lithgow, 43, was one of seven British aviation experts killed Oct.22 when the 500m.p.h."bus stop" jet crashed during stalling tests at Chicklade, Wiltshire.

The crash appeared to deal a severe blow to British aviation, BAC said special recording instruments salvaged from the burned wreckage showed that the two jet engines set at the rear of the fuselage were functioning normally when the plane plummeted to earth in a pancake landing.

The instruments showed that the wing leading edge failed to provide enough lift during a high-angle stall test.

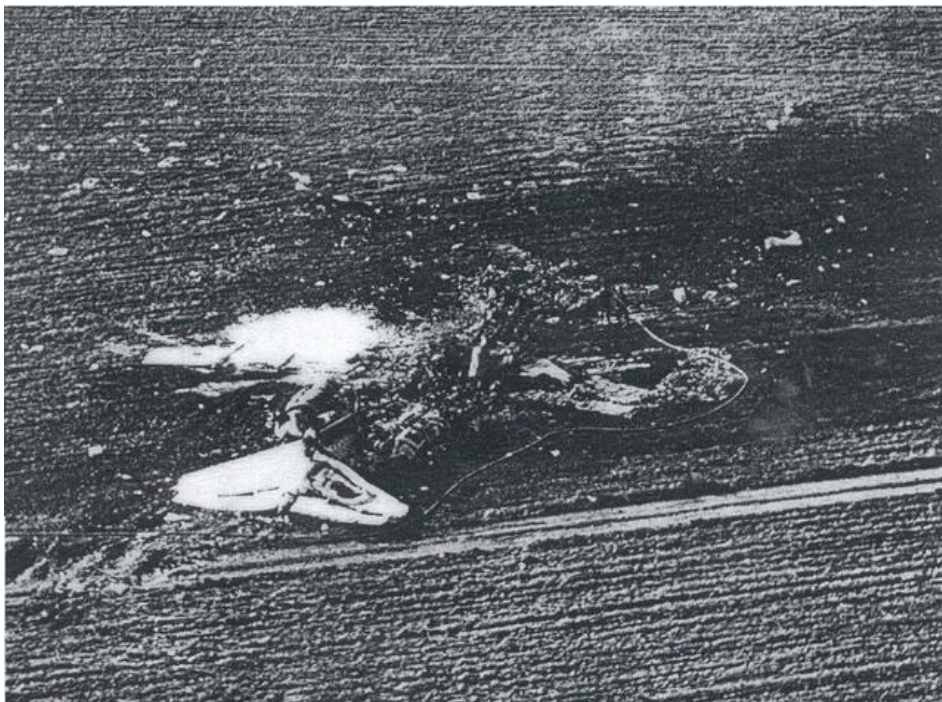
"A condition rapidly developed in which it would be impossible for a pilot, even of Lithgow's caliber, to appreciate the situation soon enough and therefore prevent further buildup of incidence," the report said.

The report said the aircraft did not spin and there was no evidence of structural or mechanical failure.

The main steps taken to remedy the situation consisted of alternations to the wing's leading edge shape to improve nose-down pitching characteristics.

The corporation plans to stage the next test flight of a BAC-111 in December, which would mean a delay of about three weeks in schedule.

(Stars & Stripes Newspaper, Pacific Editions – November, 1963)



Crash of BAC-111 at Chicklade 22 Oct, 1963 (Photo from Bureau of Aircraft Accidents [Archives](#))