

AIRWORTHINESS ADVICE NOTE A.W.A.N.8-71-1

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TYPES AFFECTED - L.13 BlanikTO - Operators of the Type. For information and action as required.

There have been a number of recent reports regarding apparent defects in the canopy jettison fittings on L.13 Blaniks including a near loss of the canopy in flight.

The defect noted has been in all reported cases applicable to near new aircraft. It has been found that the aluminium alloy shear pins through the canopy hinge fittings have been sheared although the lock wiring on the jettison handle is intact.

Investigation of the mechanism and questioning of long term operators of the type has not revealed any reasonable explanation for this eventuality under normal conditions and it seems far more likely that the condition arises from incorrect operation of the jettison handle. The jettison mechanism is well engineered and effective, the operating lever is also very prominent. It may be operated with very little effort which will result in the lock wire on the handle being sheared together with the shear pins in the hinge fittings and the normal latches will be opened.

If the jettison handle is operated inadvertently while the aircraft is stationary on the ground the canopy can be opened in the normal manner and if closed again using the normal latching mechanism a fairly high degree of canopy security will be achieved and to the inexperienced or unwary the canopy operation may appear quite secure and normal.

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Restoring the jettison lever to the locked position and relockwiring will not restore the mechanism to the safe condition; the shear pins and split pin for the hinge fittings must be renewed.

It is possible to shear the alloy shear pins in the hinge fittings by opening the canopy too far, which is possible if the restraining strap is detached. In this case the canopy is moved forward by contact with the wing leading edge which will shear the pins; this will readily be observed in the case of the split pin in the centre hinge. Shearing of the rear hinge pin is evidenced by slackness of the operating cable.

All accidental operation of the jettison lever must be immediately reported to the Club Technical Officer and the mechanism restored to the safe condition by an Authorised Engineer or Inspector before further flying operations. All pilots and passengers should be properly briefed and warned of the consequences of operation of the canopy jettison lever.

It may be significant that all reports received on the above subject have been from relatively new operators of the type, however should any evidence be found to suggest that the cause of the type of incident is the result of other than human error, please report the details.

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Chief Technical Officer Airworthiness.