SHOREHAM CRASH PILOT ANDY HILL WAS INVOLVED IN ANOTHER AIR INCIDENT A YEAR EARLIER

News / Events / Festivals, Personalities



Pilot was reportedly deemed to be flying too low and too close to the crowd at Southport air show in 2014 - a year before Shoreham disaster killed 11.

The pilot in the Shoreham Air Show crash that killed 11 people was involved in another aviation incident a year before the disaster, it has been claimed.

Andy Hill, 51, was deemed to be flying too low and too close to the crowd at Southport, Merseyside, in 2014, the air show flight director told ITV News.

David Walton, who was responsible for the safety of the show, told the programme the display was terminated and a stop call was immediately issued. Mr Hill was "debriefed" and was said to have agreed to change his display for the following day.

Sussex Police confirmed it was aware of the incident and it will form "a line of enquiry in our wider investigation".

It happened a year before the disaster at Shoreham on August 22 last year, in which Mr Hill was at

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the controls of a vintage Hawker Hunter plane that crashed onto the A27 in one of Britain's worst air show disasters.

Mr Walton told ITV News: "During the display by a Jet Provost T5 at the Southport Airshow on 20 September 2014, the aircraft was observed to be inside the lateral separation minima for the event and also below the minimum height stipulated in the Article 162 Permission issued by the CAA.

"A 'stop' call was immediately issued by the Flying Display Director (FDD) on the display radio frequency and the flying display was terminated.

"The Flying Control Committee (FCC) had also witnessed the event and agreed with the course of action.

"The pilot was debriefed, initially on the telephone and later in person, and agreed to amend his display for the Sunday display."

The Civil Aviation Authority confirmed it had an inspector at the Southport show, who spoke to Mr Hill about the incident.

Top (L-R): Matt Jones, 24, Matthew Grimstone, 23, Jacob Schilt, 23, Daniele Polito, 23, Mark Trussler, 49, Jame

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VICTIMS: Top (L-R): Matt Jones, 24, Matthew Grimstone, 23, Jacob Schilt, 23, Daniele Polito, 23, Mark Trussler, 49, James Mallinson, 72. Bottom (L-R): Maurice Abrahams, 76, Mark Reeves, 53, Richard Smith, 26, Dylan Archer, 42, Tony Brightwell, 52.

Detective Chief Inspector Paul Rymarz, from Sussex Police, told ITV News: "We are aware of an incident at the Southport airshow in 2014.

"This incident forms a line of enquiry in our wider investigation. All the families are aware of our interest in this incident."

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Mr Hill was earlier interviewed by police on a voluntary basis as part of the investigation into the Shoreham crash.

Video grab taken seconds after the plane crash-landed

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Photo: youtube/Dan Tube

Police had come under criticism from the families of the deceased for the delay in interviewing the pilot in the weeks after the deadly crash.

The former British Airways pilot, from Sandon, near Buntingford in Hertfordshire, was left in a critical condition and was put into an induced coma.

However, after he was discharged from hospital in September he was photographed in public but had still not given police his version of events. Police said they had not confirmed his "fitness for interview."

Mr Hill was in the cockpit of the Hawker Hunter jet when it performed a daring loop-the-loop display in front of hundreds of spectators at an airshow.

Just moments into his display, the 1950s jet plummeted on to the A27 in West Sussex, colliding with vehicles and exploding into a giant fireball.

The Air Accident Investigation Bureau has published an interim report into the disaster, which said Mr Hill was flying too low, ahead of its full findings.

The preliminary report revealed Mr Hill had been just 200ft above sea level when he began the manoeuvre which he failed to pull out of, despite his licence only permitting him to perform stunts at a minimum height of 500ft.

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Moments before the Hawker Hunter jet comes down on the A27 during the Shoreham Airshow in West Sussex

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Moments before the Hawker Hunter jet comes down on the A27 during the Shoreham Airshow in West Sussex Photo: Chris Watkins

A total of 11 people were killed in the horror crash, but incredibly the pilot was thrown from the wreckage alive and spent the following few weeks fighting for his life.

03 FEBRUARY 2016

SOURCE: THE TELEGRAPH
ARTICLE LINK:
https://ut.50skyshades.com/news/personalities/shoreham-crash-pilot-andy-hill-was-involved-in-another-air-incident-a-year-earlier

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