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# AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION REPORT

18 APRIL 1991

F-16

82-0920



188 TACTICAL FIGHTER GROUP

COPY NUMBER 7

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STATE OF NEW YORK

Under No. \_\_\_\_\_ Official E.H. No. 127  
In the matter of PFS  
Clerk \_\_\_\_\_ IDENTIFIED /  
Applicant ✓ RECEIVED \_\_\_\_\_  
Intervenor \_\_\_\_\_ REJECTED \_\_\_\_\_  
Other \_\_\_\_\_ WITHDRAWN \_\_\_\_\_  
DATE 2/1/00 Witness \_\_\_\_\_  
Clerk [Signature]

#### FACTUAL SUMMARY

On 18 April 1991, 2 F-16 aircraft from the 188th Tactical Fighter Group were scheduled for a local area continuation training mission involving low level flight and conventional weapons delivery training. The flight preparation and briefing were thorough and uneventful. Both pilots of the mishap flight were found to have adequate crew rest and were fully qualified to accomplish the planned mission. The forecast and observed weather for the route of flight was good, with a scattered cloud deck at 3000 to 4000 feet and visibility of 25 miles. Aircraft pre-flight, start and taxi were uneventful. The mishap flight (HOG 31 & 32) took off at approximately 1500 hours CDT and proceeded Northeast to the planned low level entry point (VR 1). The first leg of the low level route was accomplished as briefed. Approximately on half way through the second leg the mishap pilot (HOG 31) saw a large bird in his flight path and took evasive action. Approximately 18 1/2 minutes after take-off, the bird, subsequently identified as a turkey vulture (*Cathartes aura*) weighing four and one half pounds (Tab 0-2), impacted the underside of the aircraft. At the time of impact the mishap aircraft, serial number 82-0920 was at 300 feet above ground level and traveling a 455 knots true airspeed. The bird entered the aircraft engine intake and struck the engine inlet cone which fragmented causing catastrophic engine failure and resulting fire. The mishap pilot immediately zoomed the aircraft, turned toward home base and initiated engine airstart procedures. The mishap pilot leveled out approximately 3000 feet above ground level to preclude entering a broken deck of clouds. HOG 32 notified the mishap pilot that there was a fire on the right side of the aircraft fuselage adjacent to the trailing edge flaps. The mishap pilot visually confirmed this report and prepared for possible ejection.


HOG 32 reported that the fire was intensifying and the mishap pilot made his decision to abandon his aircraft. Ejection was initiated at approximately 170 knots and 2800 feet above ground level. The ejection sequence worked as designed and the mishap pilot landed in the front yard of a remote farm house in Corley Arkansas, approximately 32 miles East Southeast of Fort Smith, Arkansas. The mishap pilot received minor and superficial injuries. (TAB X). The mishap aircraft crashed in a secluded area of U.S. National Forest land, one kilometer Northwest of where the pilot landed, damaging an unimproved road and destroying a public utility pole. The aircraft ejection seat, canopy and seat kit landed near the mishap pilot. (TAB R-2).

HOG 32 contacted his operations supervisor on the squadron dedicated radio frequency and informed him of the incident. Concurrently the mishap pilot ran over to a nearby farmhouse and telephoned squadron operations, notifying them of his status. At approximately 15:20 CDT the Disaster Preparedness Officer was notified of the incident and began working his checklist. The Initial Response Team left the base via helicopter at 15:55 CDT and proceeded to the crash site. At 16:00 CDT the remainder of the Disaster Preparedness Team including the Mobile Command Post, Security Police, Firefighting Equipment, Hydrazine Response Team and Bioenvironmental were dispatched in a convoy to the crash site. At 16:15 CDT the Initial Response Team arrived near the crash site and at 16:23 the mishap pilot was transported to St Edward Hospital where he was treated and remained for observation until the next day.

The Disaster Preparedness convoy arrived at 17:15 CDT and secured the crash site. By this time most of the fire had burned out and there was only smoldering of the wreckage. At 17:38 CDT the Hydrazine Response Team located the hydrazine tank and detected a leak. At 17:40 CDT the team began neutralizing the contamination and worked at the site until dark. The team returned the next morning and finished cleaning up the leak. The Safety Investigation Team arrived at the sight at 11:35 CDT on Saturday, April 20th and took control of the crash site. By Tuesday morning April 23rd the Safety Investigation Team concluded their work and allowed the wreckage to be transported back to base, and the crash site cleaned. On Wednesday April 24th at 09:50 CDT the U.S. Forest Service representative accepted the clean up and crash site was officially closed. Total damage to private property resulting from the accident is estimated at \$1908.31 (TAB P-1).

Subsequent investigation of aircraft maintenance documentation show no discrepancies related to this accident (TAB H). Engine oil and fuel samples were found to be within tolerances and uncontaminated. (TAB U). All life support and egress inspections were complied with and current. (TAB U-10). The mishap pilot is an experienced aviator with 2598.0 hours of military flight time, including 281.1 hours in the F-16. (TAB T). His flying and ground training records revealed no significant training or performance problems. (TAB G). A review of the mishap pilots medical records show that he was medically qualified for flight duties. A toxicology test performed after the accident showed no indication of drugs in his system.

This report submitted 10 May 1991.

  
ROBERT H JOHNSTON, Major, MI ANG  
Accident Investigation Officer