

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION**

**F-16D, T/N 84-1330  
LUKE AIR FORCE BASE, ARIZONA  
2 APRIL 2008**

On 2 April 2008, at 0908L (1608Z), Viking 02, an F-16D, tail number (T/N) 84-1330, from this point referred to as the mishap aircraft (MA), landed at Gila Bend Auxiliary Airfield (AAF), Arizona with its landing gear up. The F-16D is a two seat variant of the F-16. The mishap aircraft (MA) was operated by two pilots; Viking 02A (MIP) was the instructor pilot in the front seat and Viking 02B (MP) was a student going through the instructor pilot upgrade course occupying the rear seat. The MA, assigned to the 61st Fighter Squadron, of the 56th Fighter Wing, Luke AFB, Arizona departed as position #2 in a four ship formation conducting surface attack training over the Sells Range complex. The second half of the training mission was dedicated to practice approaches flown from the back seat for the MP at Gila Bend AAF (GBN).

Following three successful approaches, the MA landed with the landing gear properly extended for a touch and go approach at GBN. A touch and go approach is a practice landing where the aircraft lands briefly before lifting back off. During the takeoff phase of the touch and go, the MP moved the landing gear handle to the up position prior to applying full throttle causing the landing gear to retract while the aircraft was still on the ground. The MA settled to the runway and slid on its belly for approximately 5000 ft. The MA came to a stop approximately 1200 feet from the end of the runway. Damage to the belly of the aircraft was substantial, but there was minimal damage to the landing gear structure, as all three gear were retracted and the gear doors were closed. Cost to repair the aircraft was estimated at \$2,616,770.66.

The AIB President found clear and convincing evidence establishing the cause of the accident to be the MP moving the landing gear handle to the gear up position prior to applying full throttle, causing the aircraft to settle to the runway due to insufficient speed and lift to maintain flight. I believe multiple human factors, to include procedural error, limited recent experience/proficiency, instrumentation and sensory feedback systems, visibility restrictions, distraction, fatigue, and channelized attention caused cognitive task oversaturation, leading to the MP to move the gear handle out of sequence for a touch and go approach.

Proper emergency procedures were followed and both pilots safely exited the aircraft on the runway. Neither pilot sustained injuries. The Gila Bend AAF fire department responded and the aircraft was rendered safe with no injury to personnel or damage to equipment.

Under 10 U.S.C. 2254(d), any opinion of the accident investigators as to the cause of, or the factors contributing to, the accident set forth in the accident investigation report may not be considered as evidence in any civil or criminal proceeding arising from the accident, nor may such information be considered an admission of liability of the United States or by any person referred to in those conclusions or statements.