

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION

F-16C, S/N 89-2052

OSAN AIR BASE

29 MAY 03

On 29 May 03 at 2002L (1102Z), an F-16CG, S/N 89-2052, crashed at Osan Air Base, Republic of Korea. The F-16 was assigned to the 36 FS, 51 FW, Osan AB, and was number two of a continuation training night 2 versus 2 tactical intercept sortie. The pilot, 1Lt Shawn Kellett, safely ejected from the aircraft and sustained minor injuries. The aircraft was destroyed on impact. A Korean National driving near the runway at the time of the mishap also sustained minor injury to the arm from flying debris. Additionally, flying debris from the wreckage damaged the Korean National's car and an Air Force officer's car.

Shortly after taking off, the pilot reported seeing a grayish object flash in front of him followed by a loud bang and an apparent fire in front of his aircraft. The pilot then experienced severe deceleration causing him to be thrown forward in the cockpit. The pilot initiated emergency procedures for an engine fire by raising the nose of his aircraft and depressing the "stores jettison" button to release his external fuel tanks. He then moved his throttle to assess engine response. After assessing that the engine was not responding properly to his throttle inputs the pilot decided that the aircraft was no longer capable of sustained flight and initiated ejection. The pilot ejected approximately twelve seconds after liftoff from the runway.

There is clear and convincing evidence that the primary cause of the mishap was a bird strike to the aircraft's engine causing it to fail. 1Lt Kellett saw a gray flash in front of his aircraft just before the mishap. Among his first utterances upon being approached by the first responders were words to the effect of "I hit a bird". Witnesses reported hearing a loud noise or "pop" and then seeing sparks fly out of the aircraft's engine before the mishap. Results of the engine analysis are consistent with damage caused by ingestion of a large bird. Multiple duck remains were found on the runway following the mishap. Additionally, testing revealed foreign matter found in the engine after the mishap to be the organic remains of a Spot-billed Duck, a species common near Osan Air Base and the surrounding area. These facts support the conclusion that the F-16 intake ingested a Spot-billed Duck on takeoff resulting in catastrophic engine failure.

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 an aircraft accident, nor may such information be considered an admission of liability by the United States or by any person referred to in those conclusions or statements.