

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION

F-16CJ, S/N 93-0534

SHAW AIR FORCE BASE, SOUTH CAROLINA

19 MARCH 2000

On 19 March 2000, at 1251 hours local time, F16CJ S/N 93-0534 crashed about one half mile north of Kingsville Naval Air Station, TX while performing an aerial demonstration. The pilot, Major Brison B. Phillips, was fatally injured in the crash and the mishap aircraft was destroyed with the loss valued at \$18,816,787. The aircraft and pilot were assigned to the 78 FS, 20 FW, Shaw AFB, SC, and were operating as the 9th Air Force F-16 Demonstration Team. There were no civilian casualties and only minor damage to a private home and vehicles, destruction of power lines/power poles; and crop damage.

The crash occurred six minutes into a scripted aerial demonstration in front of an open house/airshow audience. In the sequence leading up to the mishap, Major Phillips completed a Double Immelmann then maintained inverted flight for 21 seconds while proceeding to the pull down point for a Split-S. This inverted transition was standard procedure to allow the demonstration pilot to stay oriented to ground references and correct to the show line designated for aerobatic maneuvers in front of the crowd.

There is clear and convincing evidence that Major Phillips' attention became channelized on ground references while making large rudder inputs to correct to show line. Strong winds and a complex and unfamiliar ground environment were likely contributing factors. Major Phillips did not detect or correct a significant 12-degree dive angle. He also maintained a higher than normal power setting, initially to make up time, but lost track of the power setting while channelized on ground references and show line corrections. Failure to correct the dive angle and power setting resulted in a rapid loss of altitude from 6,300 feet AGL to 4,200 feet AGL and an acceleration from 132 knots to 444 knots. Major Phillips failed to recheck altitude and airspeed prior to initiating a full aft stick, idle power Split-S. He recognized the lower than normal altitude approaching vertical and maintained a maximum G pull until just before ground impact.

There is clear and convincing evidence that channelized attention caused the MP to begin a Split-S maneuver from a position from which it could not be completed safely.

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.