

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION

F-15E, S/N 88-1682

Seymour Johnson AFB, NC

31 May 2000

On 31 May 00, at 1130 local time (1530 Zulu), an F-15E, S/N 88-1682, was damaged following an aborted takeoff at Seymour Johnson AFB, NC. The F-15E, assigned to the 336th Fighter Squadron, 4th Fighter Wing, Seymour Johnson AFB, NC was part of a surface attack training mission. The crew ground egressed the aircraft and were not injured. The aircraft suffered fire/heat damage to the main landing gear and damage to the engines due to fire retardant ingestion. No other damage or injuries occurred.

There is clear and convincing evidence that the cause of the hot brakes was the mishap pilot's decision to abort the takeoff near rotation speed, due to his lack of experience. During a formation takeoff, the mishap pilot determined that the mishap aircraft was not going to rotate and take off when he could not match the lead aircraft pitch attitude. The mishap pilot initiated an abort of the takeoff and taxied clear of the runway and into the designated hot brake area. Shortly after arriving at the aircraft, fire-fighting personnel noted smoke and flames from the main landing gear area, extinguished the fire and directed the mishap crew to shutdown and egress the aircraft.

Analysis of the aircraft discovered no anomalies that would have prevented this aircraft from flying. Due to variations in aircraft performance and pilot technique, it is possible the lead aircraft could have begun to rotate before the wingman's jet was able to rotate. There is no clear evidence to show the wingman's aircraft had reached nose wheel lift off speed prior to aborting.

The most significant portion of the cost associated with this mishap was the exposure of the engines to foam (AFFF) fire retardant.

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.