

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

For

## A-10A ACCIDENT 3 SEPTEMBER 2001

1. The aircraft accident occurred on 3 September 2001 at approximately 12:32:04L, in the Virgin River Gorge (VRG) in northwest Arizona, along Interstate 15 between St. George, Utah and Mesquite, Nevada.
2. Aircraft involved:
  - a. Type: A/OA-10.
  - b. Tail Number: 78-0676.
  - c. Unit: 75<sup>th</sup> Fighter Squadron, Pope Air Force Base, North Carolina.
3. The Mishap Aircraft (MA) impacted the ground in the VRG following the ejection of the Mishap Pilot (MP) during low altitude formation training. This low altitude training was a segment of the first leg of a cross-country mission from Nellis Air Force Base (AFB), Nevada to Pope AFB, North Carolina scheduled for 3-4 September 2001. The MP ejected safely, sustaining only minor injuries. The aircraft was totally destroyed upon impact with the loss valued at \$11,724,785.00. Because the aircraft crashed on undeveloped Bureau of Land Management (BLM) federal property, there was no damage to civilian or private property.
4. The Accident Investigation Board President determined that the accident was caused by errors committed by the aircraft's pilot. The pilot, due in part to several adverse human factors, flew the aircraft into a situation where he felt he could not avoid impacting the terrain given his knowledge of how the aircraft was performing and his perception of the terrain around him. The pilot had lost sight of his flight leader in the rugged VRG and had attempted to turn down a narrow canyon to rejoin with him after regaining sight. However, partially through the turn, the pilot realized he could not complete the turn without impacting the canyon wall so he reversed his turn only to feel that he was now trapped and that impact with the high terrain was imminent. The pilot ejected seconds before the aircraft impacted the side of a mountain.

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.