

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION

B1-B, S/N 85-0086

ELLSWORTH AIR FORCE BASE, SOUTH DAKOTA

2 FEBRUARY 2001

On 2 February 2001, at approximately 1633 Mountain Standard Time, a B1-B aircraft, S/N 85-0086, had a ground emergency when its number four engine caught fire at Ellsworth AFB, SD. Due to an in-flight emergency (IFE), the aircraft had shut down all engines shortly after landing. The fire occurred shortly after the engines were restarted for taxiing the aircraft to the parking ramp. The aircrew safely egressed the aircraft. Two groundcrew members suffered minor smoke inhalation injuries. There was no other government or private property damage or injuries to civilians on the ground.

Two B-1B bomber aircraft departed Ellsworth AFB, on 2 February 2001, on a mission to bombing ranges near Nellis AFB, NV. The flight was scheduled to drop live weapons for a CAPSTONE demonstration which provides aircrew flight training while demonstrating airpower capabilities to general officers. Aircraft S/N 85-0086 was loaded with 56 Mark 82 high-explosive bombs. During the bomb run, the crew of S/N 85-0086 was unable to release all weapons as planned. The crew declared an IFE for hung weapons, returned to Ellsworth AFB, and landed uneventfully. The aircrew shut down the aircraft's engines on the runway hammerhead to allow munitions specialists to secure the hung and retained weapons. Once the weapons were secured, the pilot started all four engines to taxi the aircraft from the hammerhead to the parking ramp. Several minutes later, the Supervisor of Flying, an aviator assigned to oversee airfield flight operations, informed the aircrew of fire coming from their number four engine tailpipe. An aircraft maintenance supervisor controlled the fire with a fire extinguisher until the base fire department arrived and extinguished the fire. All damage was contained within the number four engine casing and was valued at \$1,071,702.00. There was no media interest at the time of the mishap.

Clear and convincing evidence does not exist to establish the cause of the B1-B (S/N 850086) engine fire on 2 February 2001 at Ellsworth AFB, SD. Due to the eight month passage of time from the mishap date to the convening of Accident Investigation Board, there is conflicting witness recollections of exact event sequences as well as conflicting weather information for the time period around the incident. The Board was able rule out many potential causes of the fire, however, with the small amount of evidence available, any further attempt to pinpoint the cause of this engine fire would be highly speculative.

*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.*