

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION T-37B, SERIAL NUMBER (S/N) 57-2237 84TH FLYING TRAINING SQUADRON LAUGHLIN AIR FORCE BASE, TEXAS 31 JANUARY 2002

On 31 Jan 02, at approximately 1:29 p.m. Central Standard Time (CST), the mishap aircraft (MA), a T-37B, S/N 57-2237, crashed 1.1 NM southeast of Runway 31 at Wizard, the Laughlin AFB T-37 Auxiliary Field. The mishap instructor pilot (MIP) and the mishap student pilot (MSP) were flying a syllabus directed local dual training mission. Neither the MIP nor the MSP attempted to eject – both were pronounced dead at the scene. The MA was destroyed upon impact with the loss valued at \$1,058,000. The impact area was on private ranch land, and to date, no claims for damage to private property have been filed as a result of this mishap.

Clear and convincing evidence indicates that the MIP was flying the aircraft in the final turn for a touch-and-go landing. At the same time another T-37 was on a straight-in approach to the runway. When the MIP reported “gear down” to the Runway Supervisory Unit (RSU) without additionally stating he had the straight-in aircraft in sight, the RSU controller questioned the MIP if he had the straight-in traffic in sight. The MIP responded that he did not and that he was going around. At that point, the MIP appeared to roll the MA to a near-wings level slightly nose-up attitude. The MIP then rolled the MA into a descending right bank turn with the bank increasing steadily from 30 degrees to 80-90 degrees, significantly exceeding the 45 degree maximum allowed by Air Education & Training Command (AETC) Manual 3-3, Vol 2. As a result of excessive bank angle combined with final turn airspeed (110 knots), the T-37 appeared to stall, departing controlled flight with a rapid right descending roll (nose-low attitude). Due to the low altitude of the stall, the MIP and MSP were unable to successfully recover the aircraft prior to ground impact. Neither crewmember attempted ejection.

There were two occasions in the sequence of events where the mishap could have been avoided.

- As a result of a loss of situational awareness, the MIP initiated the final turn without having visual contact with a straight-in inside of 2 miles, as required by AETC Manual 3-3. This necessitated a go around at a critical stage of flight—a configured aircraft at slow speed, low to the ground and descending.
- After initiating the go around, the MIP should have used the maximum of 45 degrees of bank allowed by T.O. 1T-37B-1. Instead the MIP rolled the MA into 80-90 degrees of bank, resulting in the stall from which recovery was not possible.

**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 of the United States or by any person referred to in those conclusions or statements.**