

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION

C-17, S/N 95-0107

LOCATION: DATA MASKED

21 APRIL 2003

On 21 April 2003, C-17, serial number 95-0107, assigned to the 437th Airlift Wing, Charleston Air Force Base, South Carolina, piloted by an aircrew assigned to the 97th Airlift Squadron, 446th Airlift Wing, McChord Air Force Base, Washington, departed Ramstein Air Base, Germany, on an airlift mission to an austere combat zone airfield. The runway at the destination airfield was under construction and repair. The entire west half runway was closed and was marked as to indicate that it was closed. Upon arrival the aircraft landed on the full-width runway centerline. During the landing sequence, the aircraft's two left main landing gear rolled through the excavation area, sustaining damage to its landing gear, wheel assemblies, and tires. There were no injuries to anyone on the aircraft or on the ground. There was no damage to private property. The damage to the aircraft was estimated to exceed \$1 million. There was limited media interest in the mishap.

The mishap aircraft was on a Special Assigned Airlift Mission flown in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Weather, operations and maintenance supervision, aircraft servicing and maintenance, crew qualifications, and aircraft systems were not factors in the mishap.

Board President opined the mishap resulted from the convergence of several factors, none of which alone would be likely to cause a mishap. The simultaneous presence of all the factors resulted in a lack of situational awareness on the part of the aircrew, specifically the lack of knowledge that the west half of the runway was closed and under construction. The factors were as follows: the crew did not read the Notices to Airmen, the approach control and control tower did not advise the aircrew of the runway conditions, runway markings while appropriate were not sufficiently prominent to alert the aircrew on final approach, and the tactics briefing and associated materials given to the aircrew suggested that the full runway width was available.

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.