

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION
F-16CG, S/N 89-2006 AND F-16CG, S/N 89-2111
HILL AIR FORCE BASE, UTAH
25 OCTOBER 2002

On 25 October 2002, at 1445L, F-16CG Serial Number (S/N) 89-2006, Mishap Aircraft 1 (MA1), callsign BANZAI 1, collided in midair with F-16CG S/N 89-2111, MA2, callsign BANZAI 4, approximately 82 miles southwest of Hill AFB, UT, within the confines of the Utah Training and Test Range (UTTR). Both aircraft, assigned to the 4th Fighter Squadron, 388th Fighter Wing, Hill AFB, were participating in a 4-aircraft versus 4-aircraft (4v4) Air Combat Tactics (ACT) mission as part of an Instructor Pilot Upgrade (IPUG) sortie for Mishap Pilot 1 (MP1), BANZAI 1. MP1 ejected safely and suffered no injuries. MP2, BANZAI 4, was extracted from his aircraft and fatally injured. Both aircraft were destroyed with no property damage or injuries to civilians.

The mishap mission was the second engagement on the second sortie of the day for BANZAI 1-4 and BEAK 1-4, with BEAK flight simulating Red Air (adversary) aircraft. The engagement began with BEAK flight in the southern part of the training area and BANZAI flight in the northern part, with about 50 Nautical Miles (NM) of separation. Prior to the engagement, MP1 directed the elements to swap wingmen in order to balance simulated weapons loads. BANZAI flight left the CAP heading south as a four-ship with MP1 and MP2 paired together on the west side of the formation. BEAK flight departed from the south in two elements (east and west groups) separated by a distance of approximately 12 NM.

MP1 directed the wingmen to target their respective groups, and MP2 took his simulated missile shot at the western group. Without looking to see where his wingman was, MP1 directed his element to reference heading 210 degrees, and began a 1.7G right turn to 210 degrees. At that moment, MP2 was only flying 2,500 feet away from his flight lead, approximately 7 degrees back, and slightly lower. MP2 began a left turn into the direction of MP1 to reposition to the other side of the formation. Approximately three seconds prior to impact, MP2 recognized that he was on a collision course with MA1 and abruptly pushed full forward on the control stick in a last ditch effort to fly under MA1. The two aircraft impacted left wing to left wing in a descent at approximately 32,000 Mean Sea Level (MSL).

There is clear and convincing evidence this mishap was caused by the failure of both MP1 and MP2 to properly deconflict their flight paths during a tactical turn. Other contributing factors included: loss of situational awareness; misinterpretation of closure and visual cues, task misprioritization and channelization, and expectancy.

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.