

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY  
AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION

KC-135E, S/N 56-3638

PEASE AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, NEW HAMPSHIRE

2 MAY 2003

On 2 May 2003, at 0406L (0806Z), a KC-135E, S/N 56-3638, was damaged at Pease ANGB, New Hampshire. The KC-135E, assigned to the 161st Air Refueling Wing (ANG), Phoenix, Arizona, was flying to Pease ANGB to sit alert. There were no injuries to property or personnel due to the mishap, but the aircraft sustained major damage.

After an uneventful flight from Bangor, Maine, to Pease ANGB, New Hampshire, a turkey was ingested in the number 2 engine of a KC-135 while it was being brought to a full-stop landing on the ground during the hours of darkness. The turkey ran across the runway in front of the nose of the mishap aircraft during the roll. The crew did not see the turkey until it entered the illumination of the landing lights. The crew brought the aircraft to a full stop seconds later without further mishap. A post-flight inspection of the mishap aircraft revealed significant damage to the number 2 engine and its strut, cowlings and fairings. Collateral damage was sustained to the number 1 engine, along with the starboard inboard and outboard wing flaps.

The AIB president found by clear and convincing evidence that the mishap was purely accidental in nature. The mishap occurred due to a completely unforeseen ingestion of a turkey into the number 2 engine of the aircraft upon landing. According to what the AIB determined of wild turkey habits, which are not nocturnal, the fact that this occurred during the hours of darkness in an area with no natural cover demonstrates this was an exceptional event. The crew bears no culpability for the mishap. The BASH plan at the time of the mishap was sufficient to deal with known bird populations. Now that a new threat to aircraft at Pease ANGB has surfaced, the 157th Air Refueling Wing Safety Office, which is based at Pease ANGB, has taken several proactive steps to prevent any future situations of a similar nature from occurring. They are additionally developing and implementing a comprehensive plan to establish a long term solution for the problem.

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.