

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**  
**A/10A/79-0143**  
**AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION BOARD**  
**NELLIS AIR FORCE BASE, NEVADA**  
**18 November 2003**

On 18 November 2003, at 15:33 local time (PST), an A-10 assigned to the 66th Weapons Squadron, 57th Wing, S/N 79-0143, impacted the ground in a military training range approximately 45 miles northwest of Nellis Air Force Base, Nevada. The mishap aircraft (MA), flying out of Nellis Air Force Base, was part of a scheduled A-10 Weapons Instructor Course training mission. While performing the tactical portion of the mission, the MA experienced an engine compressor stall resulting in loss of thrust from the right engine. At the time of the engine stall, the speed brakes on the aircraft were extended. The combination of the speed brakes being extended and the right engine being inoperative created a situation in which the mishap pilot (MP) was unable to maintain a safe airspeed without descending. Upon reaching the prescribed minimum safe ejection altitude, the MP ejected while the MA continued descending until impacting the terrain. The MP survived the incident without injury. The mishap aircraft was totally destroyed upon impact, resulting in a loss of \$10,326,842.20. The MA impacted on undeveloped property owned by the federal government. There were no injuries and, other than the total loss of the aircraft, there was no damage to military or civilian property.

There was clear and convincing evidence that the mishap was caused by a combination of the failure of the right engine and the inability to retract the speed brakes.

- There was clear and convincing evidence that during high angle of attack maneuvering, the right engine experienced a compressor stall resulting in a loss of thrust.
- There was clear and convincing evidence that the normal and emergency speed brake retract systems failed to close the extended speed brakes, generating an excess drag condition which, combined with the engine failure, placed the aircraft in a significant thrust-deficient condition. The pilot had no other means of retracting the speed brakes. Because of the intermittent nature of the problem and the extensive damage to the wreckage, the Accident Investigation Board was unable to establish the cause of the emergency speed brake retract system failure.

The failure of the engine combined with the increased drag from the extended speed brakes prevented the safe recovery of the aircraft. If either condition had been corrected (right engine restarted or speed brakes retracted), the MA would have been recoverable. The MP correctly analyzed the situation and applied the appropriate procedures to correct these failures. The MP's decision to eject once the MA had descended below 2,000 AGL was correct and consistent with guidance and directives.

*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.*