

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION

HH-60G, S/N 87-026014

NELLIS AIR FORCE BASE, NV

20 OCTOBER 2004

On 20 October 2004, at approximately 2242L (1812Z), an HH-60G, S/N 87-026014, crashed at a remote area approximately 146 nautical miles northwest of Kandahar Air Base, Afghanistan. The aircraft, assigned to the 66<sup>th</sup> Rescue Squadron, Nellis AFB, Nevada, of the 347<sup>th</sup> Rescue Wing, Moody AFB, Georgia, was on an operational rescue mission in support of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM. The Mishap Flight Engineer (MFE) was killed and the Mishap Pararescueman (MPJ2) was severely injured. The four remaining crewmembers sustained non-permanent injuries. The aircraft was damaged beyond repair and was destroyed on the ground by US personnel the day after the crash. There were no other government property damage and no private property damage or civilian injuries.

The Mishap Aircraft (MA) was number two of a two-ship of HH-60s on a medical evacuation mission. The mission had been deemed necessary to save life, limb, or eyesight (LLE) and was properly approved by the CENTCOM Combined Air Operations Center (CAOC) Director and the Joint Search and Rescue Center (JSRC). The flight was tasked to recover a wounded Afghani election official. The weather was clear and had no negative impact on the mission. Takeoff, departure, air refueling, and transit to the Landing Zone (LZ) were all uneventful.

The survivor was located in a bowl-like canyon surrounded by steeply rising terrain on three sides. The Mishap Pilot (MP) and Mishap Crew (MC) spent 30-40 minutes doing in-depth reconnaissance of the location to determine the best approach. During this time, they also examined the possibility of moving the survivor to a more suitable LZ, but were unable to communicate with the personnel on the ground. The MC Crew then determined the best approach to the LZ and attempted to insert the pararescuemen and the Stokes litter from a hover. During this maneuver, the MA encountered severe brownout conditions and the engines reached turbine temperature limiting. The MP attempted to go around and impacted the terrain just south of the intended extraction sight.

The MA slid along the sloping terrain on its belly until the momentum dissipated, then rolled down the hill 5-7 times before coming to rest on its right side approximately 180 feet down the hill from the point of impact. The MFE and both Pararescuemen were ejected from the aircraft during the roll sequence. The other crew members remained inside the aircraft.