

10/3

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION

MC-130H, S/N 85-000012

29 DECEMBER 2004

On 29 December 2004, at 2051 GMT (2351L), an MC-130H, Talon II, S/N 85-000012, crashed. The mishap aircraft (MA), Call Sign [redacted], assigned to the 15th Special Operations Squadron, 16th Special Operations Wing, Hurlburt Field, Florida, was conducting a nighttime logistics transport mission in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. The seven crewmembers sustained either no injury or minor injuries and the four passengers sustained injuries ranging from serious to severe.

The MA was landing at the second of several scheduled airfields when it encountered a large, unmarked, construction crater on the southern end of the runway. Approximate size of the construction area was 86 ft. 5 in. wide x 73 ft. 11 in. long x 2 ft. 10 in. deep located approximately 2700' from the southern end of runway 33 in the center of the runway (Tab CC-9.9 & CC-33). The MA impacted the construction crater at approximately 80 knots.

Following the impact, the nose gear and forward undercarriage of the aircraft were sheared off and driven rearward. The left wing departed the aircraft outboard of the number two engine. A post-crash fire rapidly consumed the right side of the aircraft and was extinguished by local fire fighters.

All seven crewmembers egressed safely; however all four passengers required egress assistance from aircrew and ground personnel.

The aircraft is considered a total loss due to extensive structural damage and was subsequently destroyed by friendly forces in order to deny access to sensitive equipment within the combat zone.

The Board President determined the causes of the accident are: 1) A failure on the part of the mishap site Assistant S-3 (Battle Captain[s]) to disseminate timely Notices to Airmen (NOTAM) information via the appropriate channels, 2) the failure of the Army project manager for construction at the mishap site to ensure the construction was properly marked and 3) a failure of the NOTAM reporting system, to include oversight and supervision of the NOTAM processes, within the area of responsibility (AOR). Contributing factors in this mishap include: 1) a lack of training on the part of the U.S. Army to effectively prepare their personnel for combat zone airfield management and operations, and 2) the failure of the Garrison Commander at the mishap location to assume responsibility for ensuring safe flight operations at the airfield. The Board President also determined there were numerous opportunities for airfield construction information to flow to the aircrew, but in each case the information was not properly disseminated prior to the aircrew departing for their scheduled mission.

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.

MC-130H, 85-000012, 20041229