

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION

MC-130P, S/N 66-0225

McCARRAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, LAS VEGAS, NEVADA

11 FEBRUARY 2005

On 11 February 2005, at 0953 PST, an MC-130P Combat Shadow, S/N 66-0225, was conducting a required engine run near the intersection of Taxiways F and B at McCarran International Airport in Las Vegas, Nevada, when a strong blast of air driven by the aircraft's propellers (commonly referred to as "prop wash" or "prop blast") blew the doors off of a small hangar approximately 400 feet behind the aircraft. The mishap aircraft (MA), Call Sign Salon 56, assigned to the 9th Special Operations Squadron, Eglin Air Force Base, Florida, was conducting multilateral helicopter aerial refueling training with special operations rotary wing units. Damage was limited to the hangar facility and to civilian aircraft and vehicles in or near the building. No injuries were sustained by the mishap aircrew or civilian ground personnel.

The MA was preparing to depart on a redeployment flight to Eglin AFB. The MA was taxiing to the runway when the crew advised ground control they would need a delay prior to departure to conduct an engine run. Ground control acknowledged and directed the MA to allow following traffic access to the runway while the engine run was accomplished. The MA maneuvered as directed and made an initial engine run attempt. This attempt was immediately aborted when the mishap loadmaster noted the prop wash was buffeting a small helicopter parked in front of the hangar. After coordinating with his crew, the mishap pilot repositioned the aircraft to direct the prop wash in what he thought was a safe direction. Shortly after initiating a second attempt, the mishap occurred.

The Board President found by clear and convincing evidence that the two primary causes of the mishap were: 1) the mishap aircrew misjudged the actual distance between themselves and the mishap hangar prior to conducting their engine runs; and 2) actions by McCarran ground control personnel exacerbated an already congested area of the airfield where the mishap occurred. The unusually close proximity of the mishap hangar to the taxiway centerline was a contributing factor to the first primary cause, while the physical airfield layout in the mishap area, the actions of ground control personnel, and volume of arriving traffic at the time of the mishap were contributing factors to the second primary cause.

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 conclusions or statements.