

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On 14 September 2006, at 1245 Local (L), the mishap pilot (MP) was the number four aircraft in a four ship of F-16CJ's flying out of Spangdahlem Air Base, Germany. At the end of the second sortie of the day, the mishap aircraft (MA) collided with the Far Field Monitor (FFM) antenna located just off Runway 05 at Spangdahlem Air Base, striking the pole with the left main landing gear while on a low approach. After the collision, the MP and the other three members of his flight climbed overhead Spangdahlem airfield, contacted the Supervisor of Flying (SOF), followed checklist procedures and concluded the MA could not be landed safely. Guided by advice from his flight, the MP properly executed the procedures for a controlled bailout. During the preparation for the controlled bailout, the MP, directed by other members of his flight, purposefully maneuvered the MA in an effort to avoid damage to life or property on the ground.

At 1306L, the F-16CJ, S/N 91-0337, assigned to the 52d Fighter Wing (FW), Spangdahlem AB, Germany, impacted the ground in a grassy field 4 miles north of Spangdahlem AB, Germany, near the town of Oberkail. The F-16CJ MA, S/N 91-0337, was destroyed upon impact. The MP, assigned to the 22d Fighter Squadron (FS), survived with minor injuries. The impact of the MA left a field of debris 1100 feet long by 750 feet wide. There were no injuries or reports of damaged property on the ground, other than the debris field left by the MA.

I find by clear and convincing evidence the mishap was caused by the mishap pilot (MP) flying the mishap aircraft (MA) to a point where he collided with the Far Field Monitor (FFM) antenna, and that the energy imparted by the antenna during the collision caused the left main gear bulkhead fitting of the aircraft to fail. I find by clear and convincing evidence that the decision to execute a controlled bailout was appropriate and timely and that the controlled bailout was accomplished professionally, in accordance with prescribed procedures, and resulted in no injuries or loss of life while minimizing loss to property.

I find sufficient evidence to conclude that the following human factors substantially contributed to the mishap: visual illusions, misperception, inattention, and task misprioritization. Further, I find sufficient evidence to conclude that the regulations which governed the design of frangible structures in the aircraft clear zone were not specific enough to present the minimum hazard to aircraft; as a result, the FFM antenna structure, while meeting existing regulatory requirements, substantially contributed to the mishap.

*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.*