

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION
MQ-1B PREDATOR S/N 99-3055
CREECH AFB NEVADA
3 AUGUST 2006

On 3 August 2006, at 1411 hours local time, during a training mission, aircraft MQ-1B Predator, S/N 99-3055, crashed short of a runway at Creech AFB, NV.

The mishap aircraft (MA) was assigned to the 11th Reconnaissance Squadron, Creech AFB, NV. The purpose of the flight for the mishap crew (MC) was to develop basic aircraft flying proficiency with emphasis on traffic patterns and landings for a student sensor operator (SO) enrolled in the Launch and Recovery Course (LRC). Aircraft damage was estimated at \$1,436,765. No one was injured in the accident. Other than the damage to the aircraft, there was no damage to government or private property.

After practicing a simulated flame-out (SFO) approach (an approach used by pilots to place the aircraft in a position to safely land on the runway following a simulated loss of engine thrust or power), the mishap instructor pilot (MIP) flew runway heading to 500 feet above ground level (AGL). He then initiated a left turn to the north. At that time, the MIP inadvertently depressed the engine ignition kill switch, instead of retracting the landing gear.

The MIP turned his head away from the confirmatory message on the heads-up display (HUD) while talking to someone else in the Ground Control Station. While looking away from the HUD, the MIP squeezed a trigger that confirmed his earlier inadvertent command to kill the engine.

With the engine shut off, the MIP immediately realized that he had inadvertently depressed the incorrect switch and that the MA had insufficient altitude to reach a runway. However, instead of trying to restart the engine, the MIP unsuccessfully attempted to glide the aircraft back to the runway. The MA crashed slightly off the runway and was severely damaged upon impact.

There is clear and convincing evidence that this mishap was caused by pilot error when the pilot inadvertently shut off the engine as he tried to raise the landing gear. A contributing factor to this mishap, supported by substantial evidence, was the pilot's lack of airmanship in not attempting an engine restart.

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.