

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION**

**B-52H, T/N 60-053  
30 NM NORTHWEST OF GUAM  
21 JULY 2008**

On July 21, 2008, at approximately 0955 local time (L), a B-52H aircraft, tail number 60-053, crashed into the ocean 30 nautical miles (NM) northwest of Guam. This aircraft was assigned to the 20th Bomb Squadron, 2d Bomb Wing, Barksdale Air Force Base (AFB), Louisiana, and deployed to the 20th Expeditionary Bomb Squadron, 36th Wing, Andersen AFB, Guam. The aircraft was destroyed. All six aircrew members are presumed to have died instantly as a result of the mishap. The aircraft had no weapons on board.

RAIDER 21, the mishap aircraft (MA), departed Andersen AFB, Guam, at 0859L to accomplish a local training mission that included performing a flyby in support of the Guam Liberation Day celebration. The flyby was to occur at 1000L in downtown Agana, Guam, near the World War II Park and the Governor's Complex, at 1,000 feet. A 2-ship flight of F-15Es, COLT 11 flight, was also scheduled to perform in the flyby, one minute after the MA. After the MA was airborne, it proceeded to and entered the pre-planned holding orbit at 14,000 feet, 30 NM northwest of Guam. At 0930L, COLT 11 flight departed Andersen AFB, proceeded to the flyby holding orbit and established holding 1,000 feet above and approximately 4 to 6 miles behind the MA.

At approximately 0953L, the mishap crew (MC) informed the Air Traffic Control (ATC) authority they were about to leave the holding orbit and confirmed the approach corridor from the holding orbit to Guam was clear. COLT 11 flight turned away from the MA to gain the desired one minute spacing and last saw the MA in a left turn toward the coast of Guam. The MA continued its left hand turn toward the flyby inbound leg and began a descent. After approximately one minute, ATC radar returns no longer tracked the MA, and it is assumed the MA impacted the surface of the ocean at approximately 0955L, 30 NM northwest of Guam.

The Accident Investigation Board President found by clear and convincing evidence that the cause of this mishap was a mis-positioning of the stabilizer trim (stab trim) mechanism. With no eyewitness account, surviving aircrew members, emergency radio calls or "black box" recordings and with minimal recovered aircraft control systems/instruments, the specific reason the stab trim was in an improper position cannot be determined. The Accident Board President found two factors which contributed substantially to the mishap: 1) the combination of low altitude with a descending left turn of the MA; and 2) late recognition of the serious nature of the situation by the MC. However, even an experienced aircrew could have found it difficult to recognize, assess, and recover from the very rapidly developing situation involving the stab trim setting.

**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 the accident, nor may such information be considered an admission of liability of the United States or by any person referred to in those conclusions or statements.**