

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION

T-1A, S/N 93-0633
Laughlin AFB, Texas
21 May 2008

On 21 May 2008, at 2144 Central Daylight Time (0244 Zulu), a T-1A, serial number 93-0633, referred to as the mishap aircraft (MA), crash landed approximately one nautical mile north of Runway 17R at Preston Smith International Airport, Lubbock, Texas. The mishap crew (MC) consisted of the Mishap Instructor Pilot (MIP) and Mishap First Pilot (MFP), both assigned to the 86th Flying Training Squadron, 47th Flying Training Wing, Laughlin Air Force Base, Texas. The mishap occurred while the MC was flying a Mission Qualification Training (MQT) flight to familiarize the MFP, as a new instructor, with local area mission procedures.

The MC was on their second flight of the day. They took off from Runway 17R with the intent to fly the Localizer Approach (a non-precision approach) to Runway 26, circle to Runway 17R, and stay in the pattern for more approaches. The MC was aware of rainshowers in the vicinity of the airport, gusty surface winds, blowing dust, and strong winds at altitude, approximately 35-40 knots. During the circling approach, the MC elected to go-around because of the winds. As the MC turned and aligned to final approach, the MA experienced a rapid nose down change in its pitch, and the MC felt a sinking sensation. The MC set the throttles at their maximum performance in order to gain altitude. The MA did not respond but kept descending. The MC applied stall recovery procedures and continued to maneuver the MA toward Runway 17R. The MC reported, "Major gust, major gust" on the radio to the tower just prior to impact. The MA hit the ground, sheared off its nose landing gear, and, after traveling some distance, came to rest on its main landing gear with its nose on the ground. The MA crash landed in a freshly plowed field owned by Texas A&M AgriLife Research. The MC shut down the engines and safely exited the aircraft. The MC suffered no significant injuries. The aircraft sustained substantial damage to numerous systems and flight controls. Total damage to the MA is estimated at \$3.7 million. In coordination with the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, site remediation to remove fuel-contaminated soil was completed at an approximate cost of \$41,000.

The AIB President found clear and convincing evidence this mishap had two main causes. First, a severe windshear in the form of a downburst hit the aircraft as it was turning onto final on the circling approach and caused the aircraft to descend rapidly and land short. Second, multiple pilot errors: ignoring warnings, poor mission planning, inattention, complacency, lack of procedural knowledge, and restricted vision, combined together to place the aircraft in the dangerous weather environment.

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.