

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PAYLOAD TRANSPORTER ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION

PAYLOAD TRANSPORTER AND CARGO

PT Tractor # 0614560003

PT Trailer # 0000031

PSRE # A4V0105

MGS # MAS0268

MINOT AIR FORCE BASE, NORTH DAKOTA

31 AUGUST 2009

On 31 August 2009, at approximately 1515 CDT, 2015 Zulu, a Payload Transporter (PT) carrying a Propulsion System Rocket Engine (PSRE) and Missile Guidance Set (MGS), overturned onto its side in a ditch approximately 2.1 miles south of Launch Facility Juliet 10, in Mountrail County, North Dakota, when the driver veered off the gravel road while distracted by a large insect that had entered the truck through the driver's open window. The PT, assigned to the 91st Missile Maintenance Squadron (91 MMXS), Minot Air Force Base (MAFB), was transporting the PSRE and MGS from Launch Facility Juliet 10 to MAFB. The PT Driver and PT Safety Observer suffered minor injuries. The PT tractor, trailer, support equipment, PSRE and MGS are being assessed for possible repair and reuse. The maximum potential total cost for damage, repair and recovery is still outstanding. An addendum to this report will be accomplished to include this data once the estimate is complete.

The PT Driver and PT Safety Observer were current and qualified to execute the mission. Weather was not a factor. Testimony and physical evidence indicated the PT was moving approximately 25 mph at the time of the mishap.

I find by clear and convincing evidence that the 31 August 2009 PT mishap was caused by driver error. The driver became distracted and failed to maintain control of the vehicle's route of travel when a large insect flew into the driver's open window and landed on the driver's back. The vehicle drifted to the right side of the gravel road while the driver was trying to remove the insect. The safety observer advised the driver that the PT was drifting to the right. The driver tried unsuccessfully to correct by steering back to the center of the road. However, the PT trailer tires went off the right edge of the road and into the ditch. The trailer subsequently pulled the truck into the ditch. The PT tipped onto its right side and came to rest in the ditch next to a field. I found no additional factors contributing to the cause of 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 the accident, nor may such information be considered as admission of liability of the United States or by any person referred to in those conclusions or statements