

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION

T-6A, S/N 02-3644 MANTEE, MISSISSIPPI  
9 JULY 2009

On 9 July 2009, during a solo student training mission, a T-6A impacted the ground about 40 miles west of Columbus AFB near Mantee, MS at approximately 1747L (local time). The Mishap Student Pilot (MSP) ejected safely. The Mishap Aircraft (MA) was completely destroyed upon impact with the loss valued at \$4,339,462.08. The MA crashed into a front yard on private property, missing the house by approximately 150 feet and the road by 6 feet. Damage to the private property was limited to front yard landscaping, trees and minor structural and vehicle damage.

After normal maintenance and pre-flight checks, the MSP took off and flew to the Military Operations Area to practice aerobatics. After practicing level flight and turns for 45 minutes, the MSP began a series of aerobatic maneuvers to include a cloverleaf and two loops. The aerobatics were characterized by incorrect airspeed throughout. On the final loop, the MSP released back pressure stabilizing the MA 90 degrees nose up. As the MA lost airspeed it transitioned into a steep right bank dive. The MSP attempted to recover to level flight. Unfortunately, because of the steep nose down attitude and rapidly decreasing altitude, the MSP thought he was in a spin or spiral. Once his altitude was below 6000 feet, MSP elected to eject.

The Accident Investigation Board President determined by clear and convincing evidence that the cause of this mishap was pilot error due to loss of situational awareness. Specifically, while attempting to perform a loop, the MSP put the MA in a nose high position with very little airspeed and was unable to regain control of the MA before deciding to eject. The board president also found that human factors and supervision were substantially contributing factors in the mishap. The MSP was overwhelmed by his training and personal issues. The Operational Risk Management (ORM) process used by the unit failed to identify these risks and there is evidence of unit complacency toward ORM. The final decision to allow the MSP to fly was placed at the wrong level of supervision – specifically on an inexperienced Instructor Pilot who had never flown with the MSP.

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.