

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION

### MQ-1B, T/N 05-3141 JOINT BASE BALAD, IRAQ 16 AUGUST 2010

An MQ-1B Predator Remotely Piloted Aircraft (RPA) crashed shortly after takeoff near Joint Base Balad (JBB), Iraq on 16 August 2010. The aircraft belonged to the 432d Reconnaissance Wing at Creech Air Force Base (AFB), Nevada, but was deployed at the time in support of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM. The crew flying the aircraft was also deployed to JBB from Creech AFB and was assigned to the 46th Expeditionary Reconnaissance Squadron at the time of the mishap. No one was injured, and no private property was damaged. The aircraft and its system were catastrophically damaged during the crash. The total mishap cost was approximately \$3,900,278.

All aircraft systems were functioning normally prior to liftoff, but as soon as the mishap pilot (MP) raised the nose of the aircraft for takeoff, flight control became erratic and remained so throughout the approximately two-minute long flight. Just after the MP raised the landing gear, the aircraft pitched up, rolled dramatically to the right, and ultimately impacted the ground. No maintenance issues that would have caused the mishap were documented or discovered after extensive post-mishap testing on the aircraft and ground control station. A review of the audio and video from the crew's ground control station, as well as analysis of the flight parameters, revealed that the aircraft's Stability Augmentation System was never turned on, prior to or during the flight, and this caused the departure from controlled flight.

The Board found by clear and convincing evidence that the cause of the mishap was due to pilot error when the MP failed to correctly execute the procedure to turn on the aircraft's Stability Augmentation System. The Board further found by a preponderance of the evidence that the human factors of Checklist Error, Inattention, and Expectancy substantially contributed to 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 an admission of liability of the United States or by any person referred to in those conclusions or statements.*