

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION

T-6A TEXAN II, T/N 08-3925 LAUGHLIN AIR FORCE BASE, TEXAS 24 SEPTEMBER 2010

On 24 September 2010, a T-6A, Tail Number 08-3925, assigned to the 84th Flying Training Squadron, 47th Flying Training Wing, Laughlin Air Force Base (LAFB) Texas, crashed after the engine suffered severe damage during an airstart attempt. The crash occurred at 1115 local Central Daylight Time on a ranch 20 miles east of LAFB. The mishap aircraft (MA) was destroyed following aircrew ejection. The Mishap Student Pilot (MSP) suffered a significant back injury as well as minor injuries and the Mishap Instructor Pilot (MIP) suffered minor injuries.

The mishap occurred during a Joint Specialized Undergraduate Pilot Training formation sortie for the MSP who occupied the front cockpit. Upon return to base, approximately 57 minutes into the sortie and 4,900 feet above ground level (AGL), the MSP executed a straight-ahead rejoin with too much speed. The MIP assumed control of the aircraft, inadvertently raised the engine cut-off gate handle, and pulled the [throttle] Power Control Lever (PCL) into the OFF position. The MIP immediately pushed the PCL above IDLE where the engine recovered to normal operation. However, due to misperception of engine status, the MIP shut down the functioning engine again. The MIP did not correctly execute appropriate restart procedures, which led to an unsuccessful airstart. Following engine shutdown for the third time, the MIP applied the correct Immediate Airstart procedures until he incorrectly advanced the PCL above IDLE while the engine was still in a sub-idle condition. This forced excessive fuel to the engine, which led to an extreme heat condition severely damaging the engine and rendering it unrecoverable. The following five airstart attempts were unsuccessful due to this engine damage. The mishap crew (MC) missed the opportunity to make a forced landing at a suitable airfield, and the MIP initiated ejection at 580 feet AGL. The MA was destroyed resulting in a mishap cost of \$5,011,287.84. The MA impacted a field, causing incidental damage to a barbed wire fence on private property. A local rancher, flying a helicopter nearby, was on scene within minutes to offer assistance.

The Accident Investigation Board President (AIBP) found by clear and convincing evidence, the cause of this mishap was pilot error. The MIP induced severe engine damage due to inadvertent shutdown of a normal engine followed by procedural errors to restart the engine. In addition, the MC missed the opportunity to attempt a forced landing at a suitable airfield. The AIBP also found by a preponderance of the evidence that the mishap crew's channelized attention on the engine, delayed the decision to reach a suitable airfield.

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.