

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
ABBREVIATED AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION
MQ-1B PREDATOR, 07-003190
AFGHANISTAN
14 FEBRUARY 2012

On 14 February 2012 at 2024Z, the Mishap Remotely Piloted Aircraft (MRPA) MQ-1B Predator, T/N 07-003190, operated by crews from the 18th Reconnaissance Squadron and 62nd Expeditionary Reconnaissance Squadron, experienced a dual alternator failure, just over four hours into an operational sortie and 32 nautical miles (NM) from the deployed airfield. Upon noticing indications of the dual alternator failure, the Mishap Mission Control Element (MMCE) crew turned the MRPA back toward the deployed airfield and began to execute the Dual Alternator Failure checklist. The MMCE crew started communication with the Mishap Launch and Recovery Element (MLRE), and then coordinated a descent from the operational altitude to 8,000 feet (ft) above mean sea level (MSL) with the air traffic control (ATC) agency.

At 2040Z, the MLRE gained control of the MRPA about 3.5 NM from the airfield using a Line-of-Sight data link. At this time, the MLRE ground control station settings caused all previously switched-off systems to turn back on, increasing current draw on the MRPA's batteries. At 2043Z the MLRE crew began the Dual Alternator Failure checklist. The Launch and Recovery Element Mishap Pilot (LRE MP) descended the MRPA directly over the airfield to enter the traffic pattern for landing through High Key - a position above the approach end of the runway that allows for an engine-out spiraling glide down to landing. At 2049Z, with the MRPA at 4,190 ft MSL (approximately 2,370 ft above ground level [AGL]) just short of the approach end of the runway, the MLRE lost control of the aircraft due to a complete loss of the MRPA's electrical power. The MRPA impacted approximately 1.1 NM northeast of the approach end of Runway 31 in a farm field. No injuries or deaths resulted from the crash. Military and civilian property damages (including the MRPA, crop damage, and minor damage to a farm building) as a result of the crash totaled \$3,960,209.91.

The board president found, by clear and convincing evidence, that the causes of the mishap were a dual alternator failure followed by the complete loss of aircraft electrical power, and the LRE MP's failure to adequately assess the nature of the emergency and fully execute proper procedures listed in the published flight manual. Upon gaining control of the MRPA, the LRE MP failed to fully accomplish the Dual Alternator Failure checklist and execute appropriate Forced Landing procedures. The LRE MP failed to execute appropriate electrical load-shedding measures and failed to land the MRPA as soon as possible, and instead displayed poor judgment by electing to maneuver the MRPA over the airfield with the intention of reaching High Key and executing an engine-out emergency landing. The board president also found, by a preponderance of the evidence, the Mishap LRE (MLRE) crew's poor crew coordination while executing checklists and their channelized attention on a landing gear warning indication, 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, if any, 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.