

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION

U-2S, S/N 80-1080

BEALE AIR FORCE BASE, CALIFORNIA

9 AUGUST 2002

On 9 August 2002 at 1553 local, a U-2S, SN 80-1080, departed the runway at Beale AFB, CA. The U-2S, assigned to the 99th Reconnaissance Squadron, 9th Reconnaissance Wing, Beale AFB, was conducting traffic pattern work which included touch and go landings.

The sortie was briefed and flown as a low altitude transition sortie in the Beale AFB traffic pattern. Aircraft preparations, preflight and engine start were uneventful. The first approach was planned and flown as a no flap, touch and go landing to runway 15. After completing one approach, the pilot planned to accomplish a simulated flameout touch and go landing to runway 15. Just after touchdown on his second approach, the aircraft started to veer toward the right side of the runway. The pilot applied full aft yoke and full left rudder to keep the aircraft on the runway. The aircraft continued to veer off to the right, began to fishtail, and then departed the runway surface.

The pilot was not injured in the accident. The aircraft was damaged after departing the runway surface and hitting a boulder and a windsock stanchion. There was no post crash fire and the wreckage was contained within the airfield boundary.

The primary cause of this mishap was the installation of the 5.95-inch torque arm instead of the correct 6.95-inch torque arm in the lower position on the tail landing gear scissors assembly. This caused the eventual failure of the lower torque arm, causing the tail wheel to caster and resulting in the mishap pilot losing total directional control of the aircraft.

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 an aircraft accident, nor may such information be considered an admission of liability by the United States or by any person referred to in those conclusions or statements.