EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION

F-16 CG S/N 87-0000357

HILL AIR FORCE BASE, UT

21 JUNE 2000

On 21 June 2000, at 1356 MDT (1956 Zulu), an F-16 CG, S/N 87-0000357, call sign Window 2, crashed on the Cold Lake Air Weapons Range (CLAWR), Alberta, Canada. The F-16 CG, assigned to the 388th Fighter Wing (388 FW), 421st Fighter Squadron (421 FS), Hill Air Force Base (AFB), Utah, was part of the large force joint training exercise Maple Flag XXXIII (MF 33) hosted by 4 Wing Cold Lake from 15 May 00 through 23 June 00.

The mishap pilot (MP), Captain Richard R. Pietrykowski, of the 388 FW, 421 FS, Hill AFB, Utah, was number two in a flight of three F-16 CGs, call sign "Widow 11" flight (mishap flight was originally a flight of four, however, Widow 13 ground aborted on takeoff roll). Shortly before the mishap, Widow 11 was targeted by a simulated surface-to-air missile (SAM) threat and performed a descending defensive maneuver. Widow 12 and 14 executed a similar defensive maneuver while maintaining visual contact with Widow 11. Widow 11 then continued his descent (below 5000 feet AGL) beneath an approaching cloud deck and directed Widow 12 and 14 to do the same. The flight leveled off at approximately 2,200 feet above the ground on an easterly heading at approximately 500 knots calibrated airspeed (KCAS).

Approximately 25 seconds after level-off, at 1956Z, Widow 12's aircraft struck a single mature American White Pelican (AWP) which penetrated the windscreen causing structural failure of the canopy and head-up-display (HUD). Debris from the canopy, HUD, and the AWP struck the MP causing confusion, disorientation and vision loss.

The MP successfully ejected from the aircraft, sustaining minor injuries. The mishap aircraft impacted in a lightly-forested muskeg area of the CLAWR and was completely destroyed.

Based on clear and convincing evidence, this accident was caused by an AWP impacting and penetrating the canopy, thus, leading to Captain Pietrykowski's decision to eject.

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.