



PRESS RELEASE

UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

**Headquarters Air Education and Training
Command
Office of Public Affairs
100 H Street East, Suite 4
JBSA-Randolph, Texas 78148
Phone - (210) 652-4400
www.aetc.af.mil**

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Accident investigation finds misaligned variable stator vane as cause for aircraft mishap

JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO-RANDOLPH, Texas -- Today, Headquarters Air Education and Training Command officials released the aircraft accident investigation board report for the F-16C Fighting Falcon mishap, assigned to Holloman Air Force Base, N.M., that occurred April 30, 2024.

The mishap occurred during a local training mission. During the mission the aircraft experienced an engine stall followed by engine stagnation and crashed 6 1/2 miles southwest of the departure end of Holloman AFB's Runway 25. The pilot sustained minor injuries.

It was determined by the aircraft investigation board that the cause of the mishap was a misaligned variable stator vane in the fifth stage of the aircraft engine. Over time, the airflow disturbance from passing through the misaligned vane caused fatigue of a fifth stage compressor blade. The blade eventually separated during flight, causing additional engine damage and significant airflow disruption, resulting in a stall and stagnation.

Both the pilot and aircraft are assigned to the 8th Fighter Squadron, which is subordinate to the 49th Wing at Holloman AFB. The aircraft was destroyed upon ground impact at White Sands National Park, with a total loss valued at \$21,702,152.