



# News Release

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Release No: 120916  
Date: December 9, 2016

## F-16 MIDAIR COLLISION ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION RELEASED

**LANGLEY AIR FORCE BASE, Va.** – An F-16CM and a Cessna 150M collided on July 7, 2015 near Moncks Corner, S.C., due to both pilots' inability to see and avoid the other aircraft, and direction given by the air traffic controller, according to an Air Combat Command Accident Investigation Board report released today.

The collision resulted in the deaths of the pilot and passenger of the Cessna aircraft. The F-16 pilot ejected and sustained minor injuries. Both aircraft were destroyed in the collision.

The F-16, assigned to the 20<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing at Shaw AFB, S.C., was enroute to Charleston, S.C. when air traffic control advised the F-16 pilot that the Cessna was approaching. In an effort to deconflict airspace, the controller directed the F-16 pilot to a 180 degree left turn. Based on radar information and a data-based animation, the F-16 pilot had an obstructed view and insufficient time to avoid the collision. At the time, the Cessna pilot was ascending into the path of the F-16.

The Board President concluded that the causes of the mishap were the controller's direction to the F-16 pilot to turn left, and both pilots' inability to "see and avoid" each other. While not causes of the mishap, the Board president found several factors which substantially contributed to the mishap, including the controller's directive for the military aircraft to operate near an uncontrolled airfield, the timing of the controller directives, and the pilots' non-use of additional systems or safeguards which may have aided situational awareness.

"While all concerned acted with the best intentions, the situation left little margin for error," said Maj. Gen. Scott Kindsvater, the board president. "It's a terrible tragedy and loss to the families."

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) conducted a separate investigation and both agencies worked to ensure all facts and evidence was fully available. "We're sincerely grateful for the cooperation of the NTSB and in improving procedures to safeguard safety of flight," added General Kindsvater.

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