



# PRESS RELEASE

**UNITED STATES AIR FORCE**

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**JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO-RANDOLPH, Texas** – Today, Headquarters Air Education and Training Command released its Accident Investigation Board report from the aircraft incident involving two T-38C aircraft that occurred Nov. 21, 2019, at Vance Air Force Base, Oklahoma.

A crew of two, consisting of an instructor pilot and a student pilot, occupied each T-38. The first crew was conducting a local formation training mission; the second was flying direct support for the training profile. Both the instructor and student pilot in the first aircraft were fatality injured.

The Accident Investigation Board president found by a preponderance of the evidence the causes of the mishap were the instructor pilot of the first aircraft failing to take control of the aircraft as a precarious situation developed and the student pilot subsequently making an inappropriate flight control input. Specifically, the student prematurely initiated an aerodynamic breaking maneuver immediately after initial touchdown, causing the aircraft to lose contact with the runway surface. At the same time, the student applied right rudder to steer the aircraft away from the left edge of the runway. The student's use of the rudder under these conditions--airborne, configured for landing and at an increased angle of attack--caused the aircraft to roll and yaw to the right and placed it on a collision course with the second T-38.

The board president found that the instructor pilot could not have successfully prevented a collision after the student pilot's rudder input had taken effect; however, the collision would have been avoidable had the instructor pilot made an accurate real-time risk assessment in the preceding moments and taken control of the aircraft.

The board president further found that a substantially contributing factor to the mishap was that the student pilot of the first aircraft lacked an effective visual cross check during the formation approach. The board president found that due to the student pilot's focus on the second aircraft, he did not adequately cross check his runway alignment prior to touchdown.

The instructor in the first aircraft was assigned to the 5<sup>th</sup> Flying Training Squadron and flew with the 25<sup>th</sup> Flying Training Squadron. The instructor in the second aircraft was assigned to the 25<sup>th</sup>

Flying Training Squadron. Both student pilots were assigned to the 71<sup>st</sup> Student Squadron, which are under the 71<sup>st</sup> Flying Training Wing at Vance AFB. Damage to both aircraft and associated environmental cleanup costs totaled nearly \$13 million.

The mission of the 71<sup>st</sup> Flying Training Wing is to develop professional Airmen, deliver world-class U.S. & Allied pilots and deploy combat-ready warriors. The wing provides Joint Specialized Undergraduate Pilot Training Phase I pre-flight training, Phase II primary training, and Phase III advanced training in fighter-bomber track or tanker-airlift track.

All students at Vance AFB are administratively assigned to the 71<sup>st</sup> Student Squadron, but fly with one of the flying training squadrons. Students in T-38 training fly with the 25<sup>th</sup> Flying Training Squadron.

Air Education and Training Command takes every measure to ensure the safety of its aircrews, while delivering superior flight training for the Air Force. AETC is committed to using the lessons learned from this investigation to prevent similar mishaps from happening again.