



## News Release

Air Combat Command Headquarters  
Public Affairs Directorate  
115 Thompson Street, Suite 211  
Joint Base Langley-Eustis, Va. 23665-1987  
Main Line: 757-764-5007  
Email: [accpa.operations@us.af.mil](mailto:accpa.operations@us.af.mil)

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### **MQ-9A ABBREVIATED ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION REPORT RELEASED**

**LANGLEY AIR FORCE BASE, Va.** – An MQ-9A crashed June 24, 2020 in the U.S. Africa Command area of responsibility after a leak caused a fuel shortage, leaving the aircraft without enough fuel to return to base.

At the time of the incident, the 214th Attack Squadron Mission Control Element located at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona, was in control of the aircraft.

The cause of the accident was a fuel leak from the Forward Electric Fuel Heater that resulted in fuel exhaustion before the aircraft could return to the Launch and Recovery Element. A delinquent Time Compliance Technical Order, the design of the fuel leak detection system, and a lack of guidance and tolerances for the MQ-9 fuel system were substantially contributing factors.

At approximately 0640Z, the ground control station started to display warnings that the fuel level in the aircraft's header tank was low. The pilot and sensor operator attempted to clear this issue, but soon realized that the measured fuel was short of expected levels. Using the primary camera, the crew discovered the aircraft was leaking fuel. The crew attempted to return the aircraft to base; however, after realizing they would not be able to make it, they were instructed to intentionally crash the aircraft.

Loss of government property is valued at approximately \$11.29 million. There were no reported injuries, fatalities, or damage to civilian property.

For more information, contact Air Combat Command Public Affairs at (757) 764-5007 or via e-mail at [accpa.operations@us.af.mil](mailto:accpa.operations@us.af.mil).

