



# AIR COMBAT COMMAND

## News Release

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### **E-11A Accident Investigation Board Report Released**

**LANGLEY AIR FORCE BASE, Va.** – Air Combat Command released an accident investigation board report today regarding the E-11A crash that occurred January 27, 2020, during which two pilots were fatally injured. The E-11A crashed in Ghazni Province, Afghanistan, following a catastrophic engine failure.

Both pilots, Lt. Col. Paul K. Voss, 46, and Capt. Ryan S. Phaneuf, 30, were assigned to the 430th Expeditionary Electronic Combat Squadron, Kandahar Airfield, Afghanistan, and were conducting a combat sortie in support of Operation FREEDOM'S SENTINEL.

Their mission, and the mission of the E-11A, was to serve as a Battlefield Airborne Communications Node, which allows different communication systems to share and relay voice, video, imagery and data between warfighters in the air and on the ground. BACN is often referred to as “Wi-Fi in the sky” and enables connectivity across multiple battlespace communication platforms.

Evidence indicates that one hour and 45 minutes into flight, a fan blade broke free from the left engine, causing the left engine to shut down. Approximately 24 seconds after the initial incident, the crew shut down the right, and only operable, engine resulting in a dual engine out emergency.

The aircraft was approximately 230 nautical miles from Kandahar Airfield when the dual engine out occurred, and neither engine airstarted to provide any usable thrust. The crew initiated a mayday call to air traffic control stating they had an engine failure on both motors and intended to proceed to Kandahar.

The aircraft was outside of the gliding distance to reach Kandahar Airfield, and also flew outside of gliding distance to other available landing locations, including Bagram Airfield, Kabul International Airport, and Forward Operating Base Shank.

The crew tried maneuvering the aircraft towards Forward Operating Base Sharana, but did not have the altitude and airspeed to glide the remaining distance. The crew unsuccessfully attempted landing in a field approximately 21 nautical miles short of Sharana. Both pilots were fatally injured and the aircraft was destroyed.

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“This tragic accident and the loss of these two Airmen will not be forgotten,” said Gen. Mark Kelly, commander of Air Combat Command. “These Airmen gave the ultimate sacrifice in service to the nation while deployed supporting an overseas combat mission. They should be recognized and remembered for their dedication and bravery.”

The AIB determined the cause of the mishap was the crew’s error in analyzing which engine had catastrophically failed. This error resulted in the decision to shut down the working engine, creating a dual engine out emergency. Additionally, the AIB president found that the crew’s failure to airstart the right engine and their decision to recover the aircraft to Kandahar Airfield, Afghanistan, substantially contributed to the mishap.

Due to aircraft vibrations and the dual engine out emergency, both the cockpit voice recorder and the digital flight data recorder stopped recording for the majority of the mishap sequence, which denied the direct evidence of certain events. Therefore, the exact experience of the crew cannot be fully determined.

The cost of damages to government property was \$120 million.

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

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