



AIR COMBAT COMMAND

News Release

ACC Public Affairs
115 Thompson Street
Joint Base Langley-Eustis, Va. 23665
757-764-5007
accpa.operations@us.af.mil

June 9, 2021

ACC releases Accident Investigation Board Report for F-16 Crash in the Hiawatha National Forest

LANGLEY AIR FORCE BASE, Va. – Air Combat Command released an accident investigation board report today regarding the F-16C Fighting Falcon crash that occurred December 8, 2020, in the Hiawatha National Forest, Michigan, during which the pilot was fatally injured.

The pilot, Capt. Durwood Jones, 37, was assigned to the 115th Fighter Wing, Truax Field Air National Guard Base, Wisconsin. He was conducting a nighttime aerospace control alert training mission with a wingman when the incident happened.

Shortly after takeoff, Capt. Jones experienced a GPS degradation due to the absence of satellite tracking data. To troubleshoot, he decided to perform an inflight alignment of the inertial navigation system and, while doing so, the two aircraft performed a lead swap.

Shortly after the swap, the aircraft entered weather conditions and Capt. Jones lost visual contact of his wingman. They deconflicted positions via vertical and horizontal means. Subsequently, the aircraft went into a series of position changes before impacting the ground. Capt. Jones did not attempt to eject.

The AIB found that the cause of the mishap was the pilot's failure to effectively recover from spatial disorientation due to a combination of weather conditions, the use of night vision goggles, low illumination, the aircraft's position and airspeed, and the pilot's failure to effectively visually scan the available primary and standby flight instruments.

Additionally, the AIB president found two additional factors substantially contributed to the mishap. The first was fixation, or the pilot focusing a significant amount of attention on a minor system issue, which detracted his attention from flying the aircraft. The second was a degraded GPS satellite tracking system.

The aircraft was destroyed. No damage to civilian property occurred.

AIR COMBAT COMMAND PUBLIC AFFAIRS

115 Thompson St.
Langley AFB, Va. 23665-1987

ACCPA.operations@us.af.mil
757-764-5007 <https://www.acc.af.mil>



Twitter: @USAF_ACC



Facebook: @ACConFB



Instagram: @aircombatcommand



Youtube: @ACCNEWSTV

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

--30--

AIR COMBAT COMMAND PUBLIC AFFAIRS

115 Thompson St.
Langley AFB, Va. 23665-1987

ACCPA.operations@us.af.mil
757-764-5007 <https://www.acc.af.mil>



Twitter: @USAF_ACC
Facebook: @ACConFB



Instagram: @aircombatcommand
Youtube: @ACCNEWSTV