



News Release

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MQ-9A ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION REPORT RELEASED

JOINT BASE LANGLEY-EUSTIS, Va. – An Air Combat Command abbreviated accident investigation board completed its examination of an MQ-9A that crashed June 20, 2021, in an undisclosed location in Afghanistan.

At the time of the incident, the 138th Attack Squadron mission control element, an Air National Guard unit located near Syracuse, New York, was in control of the aircraft.

Around 30 minutes before the crash, the pilot noticed the oil level indication dropped to approximately 40 percent. The aircraft lost 100 percent of its indicated oil level between approximately 1219z and 1224z. Shortly after, oil pressure decreased from 100 psi to 5 psi. At roughly 1237z the engine torque and propeller speed began to fluctuate and the exhaust gas temperature spiked. The pilot determined the aircraft would suffer engine failure before reaching a landing location, so the supported unit requested the aircraft be crashed at an unrecoverable location. At approximately 1254z, the pilot turned off all aircraft autopilot features, took a nose down attitude, and the aircraft impacted a mountain at 1255z.

The AAIB president found that the pilot shut down the engine after an oil leak reduced the indicated oil level to 0 percent without completing all of the applicable checklists. This prevented the aircraft from returning safely to a recovery location.

The AAIB president also determined that the aircraft's oil leak substantially contributed to the mishap.

Since the aircraft was destroyed and unrecoverable, on-site evaluation of the wreckage could not be performed and the specific cause of the oil leak could not be determined.

Loss of government property is valued at approximately \$14.43 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.