



AIR COMBAT COMMAND

News Release

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ACC releases Abbreviated Accident Investigation Board Report for MQ-9A crash in Nevada

JOINT BASE LANGLEY-EUSTIS, Va. – Today, Air Combat Command released an Abbreviated Accident Investigation Board Report following an MQ-9A Reaper crash that occurred Sept. 28, 2022 at Creech Air Force Base, Nevada.

Both the aircraft and crew were assigned to the 432nd Wing's 489th Attack Squadron at Creech AFB. The mishap resulted in no damage to civilian property, nor injuries or fatalities. The aircraft, valued at approximately \$16.6 million, was destroyed.

A Launch and Recovery Element, comprised of the pilot, sensor operator and an instructor pilot and instructor sensor operator, was conducting training when the accident happened.

While on approach for a touch-and-go landing, the pilot was using the Multi-Spectral Targeting System for primary visual cues. When nearing the ground, the MTS slewed rapidly downward from its original forward-looking position. The pilot initiated a go-around and increased the pitch angle, but became disoriented from the uncommanded MTS movement and incorrectly positioned the throttle to flight idle.

While the aircraft began to climb, the airspeed and positive climb rate bled off due to lack of thrust. Although the instructor pilot quickly identified the idle thrust and called out for a correction to throttle, the MQ-9A had already entered a stall and began to descend, resulting in the aircraft impacting the runway. Due to the force of impact, the right main landing gear failed, and the aircraft entered a

decelerating spin on the runway. When the aircraft came to a stop, it caught fire and was destroyed.

The AAIB president found the mishap occurred due to the pilot reducing the throttle to idle, instead of pushing forward to full throttle, while executing a low-altitude go-around procedure.

Furthermore, the AAIB president determined the following factors substantially contributed to the mishap: the MTS failure at a critical phase of flight caused disorientation and distraction for all four crewmembers; the pilot did not reference the sensor operator's heads up display to regain visual references and confirm the aircraft was not flying in an unusual attitude; and the instructor pilot did not prioritize ensuring go-around procedures were properly performed over correcting video display to the pilot.

The AAIB report can be viewed at [insert URL]