



PRESS RELEASE

U.S. Air Forces in Europe and Air Forces Africa

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2023 Ground Mishap Accident Investigation Report Released

RAMSTEIN AIR BASE, Germany -- U.S. Air Forces Europe – Air Forces Africa released an Accident Investigation Board report for a ground mishap that occurred at an undisclosed location on Nov. 17, 2023.

The accident involved a ground collision between an MJ-1 weapons loader – also known as a “jammer,” or bomb lift – and an F-16 Fighting Falcon fighter aircraft belonging to the 555th Fighter Squadron at Aviano Air Base, Italy.

The mishap resulted in no fatalities or significant injuries but caused approximately \$5,000 in environmental clean-up costs and \$30 million in damages to the mishap aircraft.

The accident occurred after a weapons loader operator was unable to stop the jammer while driving it in reverse. The jammer hit a nearby F-15E Strike Eagle fighter aircraft, causing the operator to hit his head and hurt his back on the jet’s bomb rack unit, and pinning the operator to the dashboard of the jammer. The jammer bounced off the landing gear tire of the F-15E, simultaneously throwing the operator off the jammer while also sending the jammer toward the F-16 at a high rate of speed. The jammer impacted the F-16’s right fuel tank, causing a fuel leak. Sparks emitted from the jammer ignited a fire that engulfed the jammer and the right side of the F-16.

The Accident Investigation Board president determined the cause of the mishap was a loss of situational awareness on the part of the weapons loader operator and failure to properly apply emergency shutdown procedures.

The Board president also determined that a lack of proper documentation for the jammer fleet at the undisclosed location and a loose culture of adherence to Air Force standards and technical procedures by maintainers at the location were contributing factors in this ground mishap.

The AIB report can be viewed [here](#).

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