



PRESS RELEASE

UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

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Investigation cites body position, incapacitation as contributions to parachute mishap

JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO-RANDOLPH, Texas - Air Education and Training Command officials released the Accident Investigation Board (AIB) report, today, for the free-fall parachuting mishap involving a United States Air Force Academy cadet at the Academy's Davis Field, in Colorado Springs, Colo., July 31, 2023.

The AIB president found, by a preponderance of the evidence, the mishap was caused by an uncontrollable downward spiral with an entanglement of the parachute inducing stagnant hypoxia that rendered the cadet unconscious or incapable of pulling the reserve parachute handle prior to impacting the ground.

The mishap occurred on the cadet's third free fall training jump during which he exited a UV-18B, also known as a Twin Otter, in an unstable body position. The cadet unintentionally rolled on his back before pulling the main ripcord which contributed to one of his arms becoming entangled in the parachute lines. Following the entanglement, the cadet's parachute began to spin at a high rate of speed, more likely than not, inducing stagnant hypoxia and rendering him, unconscious or incapable, of pulling the handle for the reserve parachute. The cadet was unable to execute a proper parachute landing fall to minimize injury.

The cadet, who sustained severe injuries after hitting the ground with a deformed but fully open parachute, has recovered from his injuries and returned to the USAFA to resume the graduation requirements to commission as an active-duty officer.

The aircraft was operated by the 98th Flying Training Squadron belonging to the 306th Flying Training Group at the USAFA. The 306 FTG is organizationally aligned under the 12th Flying Training Wing. The estimated value of government property lost is \$490 to replace the parachute equipment.