

US Air Force News Release

Officials release Pave Low accident report

3/11/2004 - **HURLBURT FIELD, Fla. (AFPN)** -- An accident investigation board determined that failure of the No. 2 engine because of compressor stall, failure of the auxiliary fuel tanks to jettison and the uneven terrain of the landing area caused an MH-53 Pave Low helicopter to crash Nov. 23. The board released its findings March 10.

The MH-53, assigned to the 20th Special Operations Squadron, crashed nine miles east of Bagram, Afghanistan, while supporting Operation Mountain Resolve.

Four of the six crewmembers on board, and one U.S. Army passenger died in the accident.

The accident investigation board also cited several contributing factors to the crash. One of these factors was the subsequent failure of the No. 1 engine when the demands of the high altitude and high-gross weight caused an over-temperature and compressor stall. Insufficient written guidance on checking the auxiliary fuel tank jettison system was also cited.

The investigation board comprised helicopter systems experts, medical, legal and aircrew advisers. (Courtesy of Air Force Special Operations Command News Service)