

59-0125

07 Nov 71

84th FIS

USAF ACCIDENT/INCIDENT REPORT

(Fill in all spaces applicable. If additional space is needed, use additional sheet(s).)

| | | |
|---|--|---|
| 1. DATE OF OCCURRENCE (Day, month and year) Sunday, 7 Nov 1971 | 2. VEHICLE(S)/MATERIEL INVOLVED (Model designation and serial no. if applicable) F-4D 65-0653 F-106A 59-0125 | 3. FOR GROUND ACCIDENTS ONLY (Base Code and Report Serial No.) 71-11-7-1 |
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| 4. PLACE OF OCCURRENCE: STATE; COUNTY; DISTANCE AND DIRECTION FROM NEAREST TOWN. IF ON BASE, IDENTIFY. IF OFF BASE, GIVE DISTANCE FROM NEAREST BASE. Nevada, Lincoln, 37° 25' 20" N, 113° 58' 30" W, 018° / 81 NM Nellis AFB | 5. HOUR AND TIME ZONE LOCAL 1325 PST | 6. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DAY <input type="checkbox"/> NIGHT <input type="checkbox"/> DAWN <input type="checkbox"/> DUSK |
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|---|------------------|--------------|--------|-------|------------------|----------------------|
| 7. ORGANIZATION POSSESSING/OWNING VEHICLE OR MATERIEL AT TIME OF MISHAP | | | | | | |
| MAJOR COMMAND | SUBCOMMAND OR AF | AIR DIVISION | WING | GROUP | SQUADRON OR UNIT | NAME AND BASE CODE |
| TAC | 12AF | | 49 TFW | | 7 TFS | Holloman AFB KWRD |

8. (List organizations of second vehicle, if they differ from item 7 above)

| | | | |
|-----|------|--------|---------------------|
| ADC | 26AD | 84 FIS | Hamilton AFB JYJ |
|-----|------|--------|---------------------|

9. ORGANIZATION AND BASE SUBMITTING REPORT (Do not abbreviate)
 57 Fighter Weapons Wing, Nellis Air Force Base, Nevada

10. LIST OF PERSONNEL DIRECTLY INVOLVED
 (See AFM 127-2 and AFR 127-4 for specific instructions)

| LAST NAME, FIRST NAME, MIDDLE INITIAL | GRADE | SSAN | ASSIGNED DUTY | AERO. RATING | DEGREE OF INJURY (Use Abb) | DAYS LOST ON DUTY ONLY |
|---------------------------------------|-------|------------|---------------|--------------|----------------------------|------------------------|
| Viccellio, Henry (NMI), Jr. | Maj | [REDACTED] | FP | Sr Pilot | N | |
| Robertson, James A. | Capt | [REDACTED] | N | Nav | N | |
| Lowry, Clifton L. | Maj | [REDACTED] | FP | Sr Pilot | N | |
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11. (Enter applicable letter(s) in DEGREE OF INJURY column: None-N; Temporary Total-TT; Permanent Partial-PP; Permanent Total-PT; Fatal-F; Missing-M)

12. NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION OF ACCIDENT: Give a detailed history of flight, or chronological order of facts and circumstances leading to the mishap. The results of investigation and analysis to include discussion of all cause factors listed, findings, and recommendations, and any corrective action taken.

13. (Enter applicable letter(s) in DEGREE OF INJURY column: None-N; Temporary Total-TT; Permanent Partial-PP; Permanent Total-PT; Fatal-F; Missing-M)

[REDACTED]

14. AUTHENTICATION

| | | | |
|--|---|--|-------------------|
| 12. IDENTIFICATION BY (TIC/IC) President, Investigating Board | TYPED NAME AND GRADE FRIED A. TREYZ, Col, USAF | SIGNATURE  | DATE 23 NOV 71 |
|--|---|--|-------------------|

REPORT OF MAJOR AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT INVOLVING F-4D, SN 65-0653, AND F-106A, SN 59-0125, WHICH OCCURRED ON 7 NOV 71, 018°, 81 NM NELLIS AFB, NEVADA - PILOTS WERE MAJ VICCELLIO AND MAJ LOWRY RESPECTIVELY.

HISTORY OF FLIGHT

On 7 Nov 1971, a CORONET ORGAN V mission was flown consisting of SNAKE 61 flight, a flight of four F-4's, and GREEN flight, a flight of two F-106's. SNAKE 61 flight was to provide fighter escort for SNAKE 65 flight and SNAKE 69 flight, two flights of four F-4D's. GREEN flight was to provide air defense for the "aggressor force" and SNAKE flight was a part of the "friendly force" to be intercepted. The flight line-up was as follows:

| <u>Acft No.</u> | <u>Call Sign</u> | <u>Aircrew</u> | <u>Rating</u> |
|-----------------|------------------------|---|--------------------|
| 65-0653 | SNAKE 61A SNAKE 61B | Maj H. Viccellio, Jr. Capt J. A. Robertson | Pilot Navigator |
| 65-0639 | SNAKE 62A SNAKE 62B | Capt J. A. Lotter Capt F. P. Arbeit | Pilot Navigator |
| 67-0749 | SNAKE 63A SNAKE 63B | Capt R. C. Evans Capt R. C. Hague | Pilot Navigator |
| 67-0739 | SNAKE 64A SNAKE 64B | Capt W. R. Harwood Capt C. T. Carrington | Pilot Navigator |
| 59-0465 | GREEN 1 | Maj E. Woelfel | Pilot |
| 59-0125 | GREEN 2 | Maj C. L. Lowry | Pilot |

GREEN flight was briefed in accordance with 12AF OPORD 7-71, CORONET ORGAN V, and ADCM 51-106, F-106 Aircrew Training. The general mission briefing for GREEN flight (Maj Lowry G-1, Maj Bledsoe G-2) was delivered by Maj L. D. Haight on 2 Nov 1971. Prior to deployment a briefing was delivered at Hamilton AFB on 29 Oct 1971 by Capt S. A. Wayne, the CORONET ORGAN V project officer for the 84 FIS. Maj Lowry attended both of these briefings and the rules of engagement were thoroughly covered in each briefing. On the day of the accident, 7 Nov 1971, the specific mission briefing for GREEN flight was conducted by Capt Ross Moon, an instructor pilot from the USAF Interceptor Weapons School at Tyndall AFB. The flight briefing was conducted by Maj Lowry. After the flight briefing Maj Lowry elected to change flight positions with Maj Bledsoe so that Maj Bledsoe could fly lead, a position that Maj Bledsoe had not yet flown in CORONET ORGAN V. Maj Lowry failed to inform Capt Moon, the duty officer, of this change. SNAKE 61 flight was briefed in accordance with TACM 55-4, F-4 Aircrew Operational Procedures, 12AF OPORD 7-71, CORONET ORGAN V, and the 49 TFW/DOV letter, dated 3 Nov 1971, subject CORONET ORGAN V Mission Preparation. On 7 Nov 1971, Lt Col Fincher (SNAKE 65), the mission commander, briefed SNAKE 61, 65, and 69 flights. The rules of engagement were thoroughly covered in this briefing. After the general mission briefing the three flights conducted separate flight briefings. Maj Viccellio briefed SNAKE 61 flight to split at the entry point with SNAKE 61 and 62 providing escort for SNAKE 65 flight and 63 and 64 providing escort for 69 flight. SNAKE 65 flight was to enter the target area from the north and SNAKE 69 from the south. Maj Viccellio briefed his element, SNAKE 61 and 62, to use Double Attack Tactics. SNAKE 61 flight was configured with two 370 gallon drop tanks outboard and two MAU-12 pylons on inboard wing stations. Following the end of runway inspection, SNAKE 61 flight departed from Holloman AFB at 1145 PST and proceeded to RFD ANCHOR refueling track. The flight on-loaded 7,500

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pounds per aircraft. SNAKE 61 left the tanker and proceeded to the exercise entry point where SNAKE 61 flight split into pre-briefed elements to cover SNAKE 65 and SNAKE 69 flights. SNAKE 61 positioned his element three miles behind and 4,000 feet above the formation off set slightly down sun from and to the right side of SNAKE 65 flight.

At 1300 PST GREEN flight received a scramble from Wager Control. GREEN 1 (Maj Bledsoe) ground aborted because he was unable to close the speed brakes and was replaced by Maj Woelfel, who became airborne at 1310 PST. Following the end of runway inspection, GREEN 2, (configured with two full 360 gallon drop tanks) Maj Lowry, became airborne at 1305 PST and was vectored to PURPLE flight (two F-106's, PURPLE 1, Maj A. J. Kelly, PURPLE 2, Capt J. A. Yurkiewicz) by Adams Control in order to support PURPLE flight. PURPLE flight was intercepting a flight of F-4's (possibly SNAKE 65 flight). Approximately ten minutes after becoming airborne, GREEN 2 visually sighted PURPLE flight and the intercepted F-4's. Because PURPLE flight was approaching bingo fuel they disengaged and started to return to base.

In the meantime SNAKE 61 flight had visually sighted two F-106's (possibly PURPLE flight) closing on SNAKE 65 flight from six o'clock. SNAKE 65 flight was in a starboard 360 degree turn to the right for spacing. SNAKE 61 and 62 dove toward the F-106's and assumed that they drove them away from SNAKE 65 flight because the F-106's turned left for 180 degrees of turn away from SNAKE 65 flight. SNAKE 61 flight turned back toward SNAKE 65 flight and climbed back to altitude when they sighted two more F-106's approaching SNAKE 65 flight. SNAKE 62 had crossed behind 61 and was on the inside of the turn. SNAKE 62 then took the lead of the double-attack cell and initiated a diving attack on the F-106's. SNAKE 61 kept SNAKE 62 in sight but continued an easy climbing turn to the right. SNAKE 62 asked his position from 61 after 62 observed the F-106's break away from SNAKE 65 flight. SNAKE 61 replied that 61 was north-west of 62. SNAKE 61 continued his right turn at 27,000 feet, 300 knots, slightly nose high.

Meanwhile GREEN 2 had sighted what he assumed to be a single F-4 (SNAKE 61) and started an attack. The first time SNAKE 61 realized he was being intercepted was after GREEN 2 had closed to about 2,000 feet at SNAKE 61's seven o'clock position while SNAKE 61 was in his right turn at 27,000 feet. Capt Robertson, SNAKE 61 WSO, visually sighted GREEN 2 at this time. Maj Viccellio, in an attempt to acquire GREEN 2 visually, continued to roll to the right to about 135 degrees, increased his angle of attack to about 14 units, and established a right descending turn bottoming out at about 18,000 feet and pulling back up to about a 20 degree nose high attitude. Maj Viccellio was still in a right bank when he observed GREEN 2 in his 5:30 position at about 700 to 800 feet closing with what Maj Viccellio estimated to be a 150 knot overtake rate. Maj Viccellio started the nose down and had started rocking the wings to signify engagement termination when the mid-air collision occurred. Maj Lowry continued to close on SNAKE 61's right side at a rate he estimated was 50 knots until he was at SNAKE 61's two o'clock position. Maj Lowry then broke left in front of SNAKE 61 and the collision occurred at about 1325 PST. Maj Viccellio stated that at the time of impact the F-4 was about five degrees nose high, 18,000 feet, 350 knots, and in about a ten degree right bank. Maj Lowry thought that SNAKE 61 was in a slight left bank. The left elevon of GREEN 2 impacted the radome of SNAKE 61.

SNAKE 61 was uncontrollable in pitch and in a slow uncontrolled right turn. Maj Viccellio initiated a successful ejection sequence about 15 seconds after

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the collision occurred. At the time of egress SNAKE 61 was at 18,000 feet MSL. The ejection sequence was normal. The F-4 circled the aircrew twice and impacted the ground in a nose-down attitude. The F-4 crew was in the descent for approximately eight minutes and was on the ground at about 1333 PST. The HH-43 helicopter, PEDRO, picked up the F-4 crew at 1530 PST. The crew sustained insignificant injuries. The F-4 ejection and survival equipment functioned properly with the exception of Maj Viccellio's automatic beeper.

GREEN 2 flew back toward Nellis AFB intending to land. GREEN 1, Maj Ed Woelfel (Maj Woelfel was scrambled to replace Maj Bledsoe) became airborne at 1310 PST and was vectored by Adams Control to join with GREEN 1. The collision occurred prior to GREEN 1 arriving in the area, however, GREEN 1 was joined with GREEN 2 shortly after the mid-air and gave GREEN 1 an extremely thorough airborne inspection enroute to Nellis. GREEN 1 observed only one area of damage to GREEN 2 (see TAB R). The damage was confined to three small holes in the top of the left wing just forward of the left elevon, and the left elevon was about 30 percent missing. Additionally, the outboard side of the left elevon was up approximately 25 degrees. The inboard side of the left elevon was split horizontally with the top portion up past neutral and the bottom approximately ten degrees down. GREEN 2 performed an initial controllability check at about 230 knots with the gear down. Full right rudder, right elevon, and right trim were the control inputs required to keep the aircraft relatively straight and level. These control inputs were confirmed by GREEN 1. Below 230 knots these control inputs were insufficient to maintain stable flight. GREEN 2 was also concerned because of the fuel that was siphoning from his left wing. At the time of the mid-air collision GREEN 2 had approximately 6,000 pounds of fuel, assumed to be balanced. At the time of ejection, 18 minutes later, GREEN 2 indicated 3,500 pounds total, 3,000 on the right side and 800 on the left side. The number three and fuselage tanks were not checked. After the initial controllability check GREEN 2 performed at 1329 PST, the landing gear was raised to conserve fuel since the range from Nellis was approximately 55 miles. GREEN 2 at this time intended landing on runway 21. Nellis Tower advised GREEN 2 that the MA-1A barrier was raised on the approach end of runway 21 and the tower asked if GREEN 2 could land on runway 03. GREEN 2 decided to attempt landing on runway 03. Enroute to runway 03, GREEN 2 decided that landing the aircraft would be impossible because it was becoming more difficult to control. This decision was made about one minute after extending the landing gear for the second time. GREEN 2 ejected on the 045° / 8 of the Nellis TACAN at 1343 PST. At the time of ejection, GREEN 2 was at 12,000 feet MSL, 260 knots, relatively straight and level. The aircraft immediately entered a left spiraling turn and impacted the ground on the 059° / 10 of the Nellis TACAN at approximately 1344 PST. GREEN 2's ejection was normal with four exceptions. The automatic deployment feature of the survival kit failed. The manual pulling of the survival kit emergency release handle failed to release the kit. The automatic beeper failed to work. The parachute had two holes torn in it. Maj Lowry elected to keep the survival kit attached to him on both sides and hit the ground in that manner. Maj Lowry was in the descent approximately seven minutes and was on the ground at about 1350 PST. The HH-43B helicopter, PEDRO, followed the chute down and delivered Maj Lowry back to Nellis at 1400 PST, completing the rescue operation. Maj Lowry sustained only very minor injuries.