



# News Release

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## F-16CM THUNDERBIRD ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION RELEASED

**LANGLEY AIR FORCE BASE, Va.** – Air Combat Command today released an accident investigation board report regarding the F-16 Thunderbird crash which occurred April 4, 2018. Major Stephen Del Bagno, an F-16CM pilot assigned to the United States Air Force Air Demonstration Squadron, the “Thunderbirds,” fatally crashed while engaged in a routine aerial demonstration training flight at the Nevada Test and Training Range (NTTR) near Creech AFB, Nevada.

The mishap took place during a practice of the “High Show” version of the Thunderbirds aerial demonstration in the south part of the NTTR. During the “High Bomb Burst Rejoin” maneuver near the scheduled end of the aerial demonstration training flight, the pilot spent approximately 22 seconds in inverted flight between 5,500 and 5,700 feet above the ground level. After transitioning into a descending half-loop maneuver (Split-S) the pilot experienced a gravity induced loss of consciousness (G-LOC), became completely incapacitated for a period, and was fatally injured on impact without an ejection attempt.

The Air Force is constantly evaluating its procedures with regard to flight safety, and the Thunderbirds will incorporate the findings of this report into their procedures and process improvements.

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