



OFFICIAL REPORT

ACCIDENT/INVESTIGATION REPORT

| | | | | | |
|-----------|---------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|--------|---------|
| DATE: | 20 December 2009 | TIME: | Approximately 1100 hours | | |
| WEATHER: | Partly Cloudy | TEMPERATURE: | 57 Degrees Fahrenheit | | |
| | | WIND: | N-NE 20, Gusts to 40 MPH | | |
| | | RELATIVE HUMIDITY: | > 30% | | |
| LOCATION: | West Delray Regional Park | COUNTY: | Palm Beach | STATE: | Florida |
| PILOT: | "Electric Mark" Drogowitz | Owner/Pilot: | "Brooklyn Joe" Mannino | | |

Circumstances: Experienced pilot and Chief Flight Instructor (Palm Beach Radio Control Association) Mark Drogowitz (a.k.a. "Crash") was piloting an F-16 Fighting Falcon ducted fan aircraft (electric) under trying flight conditions at the above referenced flying field. The first minute of flight indicated normal flight characteristics (for Mark) until at a little over one minutes into the initial flight a lower ducted fan (magnetic) cover flew off the aircraft during one of Mark's 9G maneuvers. The pilot (Mark) was able to land the F-16 with minor damage to the lower ducted fan cover. The Owner of the aircraft (Brooklyn Joe -me) was able to provide immediate mechanical repairs to the aircraft and both the pilot (Mark) and owner (Joe) certified its airworthiness and launched (hand launch) the aircraft for its second flight of the day. Approximately two minutes into the second flight the flight line noticed that the lower ducted fan hatch had come loose and re-seated itself at which time the Chief Flight Instructor and pilot (Mark) decided to abort the flight and land. Prior to landing, the pilot (Mark) was unable to control the aircraft resulting in a "crash landing" in a water soaked area of the grass strip runway.

Investigation: Recovered aircraft had significant nose damage and some underbelly damage. Upon careful examination in the lab (my garage) it was discovered that the ducted fan unit (motor and fan) had broken away from its mounted (spot glued) area within the housing.

Finding of Fact: It appears that the motor/fan unit probably partially broke away from its mounted location on the first flight, thus causing the lower ducted fan cover to dislodge and causing the minor damage that was repaired in the field prior to the second flight. The high speed stress caused by the 9g maneuvers on the second flight caused the complete separation of the ducted fan/motor unit and was responsible for the slow flight "whinnying" heard by the aircraft owner (me) prior to the crash. **LOSS OF DUCTED FAN WAS THE CAUSE OF THE CRASH!**

Recommndations: Pilot is absolved of any responsibility for the crash of the F-16 owned by other party (me). Pilot and Chief Flight Instructor is admonished for not carefully checking the airworthiness of the aircraft after the first flight in light of the fact that he was flying a "newbe" (me) owners aircraft. Aircraft owner is fined \$139.00 for allowing his aircraft to be flown without an airworthiness certificate (are you kidding me?).

Conclusion: All pilots are warned that they are responsible for checking each aircraft, especially the "China Cheapos" from the likes of Bananna Hobby and Nitro Planes.