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EO 12958 6.2(c)

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25 January 1967

MEMORANDUM FOR: Acting Deputy Director for Science and
Technology

SUBJECT: Loss of Article 125 (OXCART Aircraft)

1. This memorandum is for your information.
2. The Air Force Flight Safety Team has completed its investigation of the accident involving Article 125. While no precise cause could be established for the loss, it was considered most probable that a fuel gauging error led to fuel starvation and engine flame-out sixty-seven miles from the base. The pilot ejected successfully but was unable to separate from the seat and was killed upon impact.
3. Personnel involved in the accident investigation were able to simulate the type of fuel gauging error to which the accident could be attributed. This type of error is induced when the shield of the fuel tank probe in tank number three is grounded to aircraft structure. The nature of the error is such that it varies in proportion to the amount of fuel in the tank. This is: the more fuel in the tank, the greater the error. As fuel is used the total fuel indication returns to near normal and the pilot is suddenly faced with an unexplained apparent loss of fuel. Gauging errors such as this are not readily apparent to the pilot.

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4. Failure of the pilot to separate from the ejection seat was attributed to wedging of the parachute and seat kit assembly in the seat upon actuation of the seat separation mechanism and possible binding of the lap belt release assembly. The latter could not be conclusively proven. However, wedging of the parachute/kit assembly could be demonstrated with the seat head rest installed.

5. Actions are currently underway to inspect all aircraft fuel gauging systems, improve calibration procedures and provide a positive method of cross-checking fuel aboard versus indicated. All ejection seats are undergoing inspection and head rests are being removed pending redesign. Upon completion of these actions it is planned to release the aircraft for flight.



JOHN PARANGOSKY
Acting Director of Special Activities

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