

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
Friendly Fire Incident
COMBINED INVESTIGATION BOARD
Coalition Air Base, SWA
4 September 2006

On 4 September 2006, at [REDACTED], approximately 20 nautical miles (NM) southwest of Kandahar, Afghanistan, while executing air-to-ground combat operations in support of coalition troops, [REDACTED], a pilot flying an A-10 assigned to the 81st Fighter Squadron, engaged a friendly position which he had incorrectly identified as the intended target. Approximately 180 rounds of 30mm high explosive incendiary ammunition were expended in the vicinity of C Company, 1st Battalion of the Royal Canadian Regiment. [REDACTED] casualties were sustained including one fatality. [REDACTED] troops were medically evacuated out of theater for treatment, [REDACTED] were immediately returned to duty and the remaining [REDACTED] were released shortly after the incident.

(U) The Combined Investigation Board (CIB) found by clear and convincing evidence that the cause of the friendly fire incident on 04 September 2006 was the misidentification of a friendly position by the mishap pilot while engaged in close air support operations.

(U) In an effort to acquire the target the mishap pilot (MP1) visually misinterpreted a friendly force garbage fire as his intended target due to a perceptual error of blending the infrared imagery of the enemy position on his target pod display with his visual sighting of the friendly force garbage fire. Additionally, adverse environmental and low illumination light conditions further exacerbated his ability to perform combat identification. Under these conditions, the mishap pilot was at a range and altitude from where he could see neither personnel nor friendly vehicles in the mishap area. The mishap pilot fired his 30mm cannon at the garbage fire, which he had incorrectly identified as the location of a previous bomb impact point due to channelized attention, other human factors, and a failure to cross check available targeting cues.