

# Air Combat Command

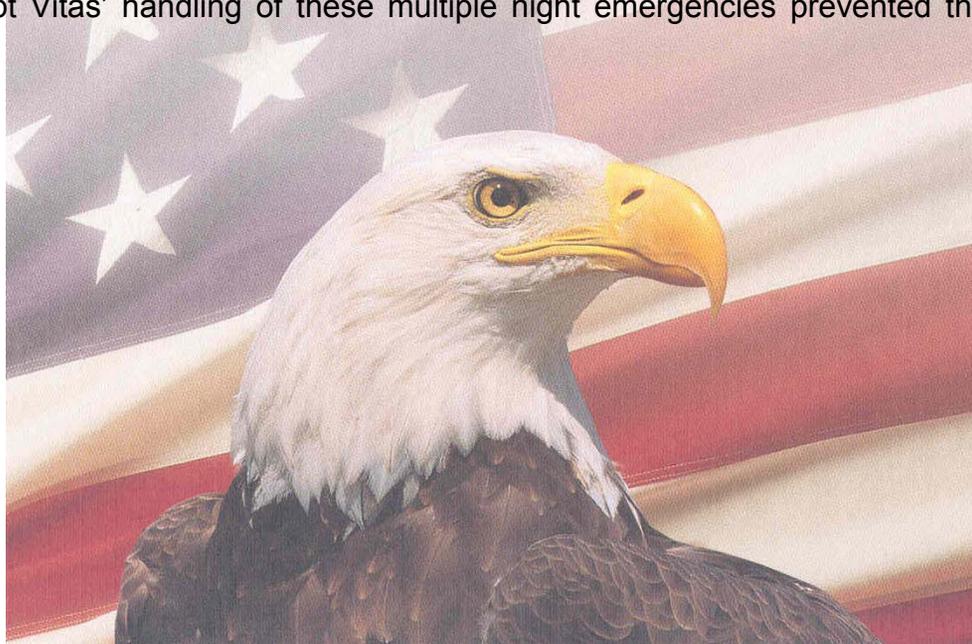
# Pilot Safety Award of Distinction

## Captain Diane E. Vitas

While her A-10 was passing 4,000 feet mean sea level during departure for a local night sortie, Capt Vitas noticed the left fuel flow gauge fluctuating plus/minus 500 pounds per hour and the left oil pressure gauge fluctuating plus/minus 15 to 20 pounds per square inch. Capt Vitas called “knock-it-off” and declared an emergency with Fayetteville Departure, who gave her flight an immediate vector back to Pope AFB, N.C. Capt Vitas cleared her wingman to chase, retarded her left throttle to idle, and performed her descent check. That is when she noticed that the right fuel flow gauge was reading zero and the left fuel flow was fluctuating and intermittently reading zero. Additionally, the left engine oil pressure continued to fluctuate out of limits. Capt Vitas contacted the Supervisor of Flying (SOF) and relayed that she was planning on recovering via a straight-in approach using a single-engine configuration. The SOF read the single-engine landing checklist as the flight requested extended maneuvering airspace for the single-engine approach. The flight started the approach at 10 Nautical Miles (NM), but Capt Vitas got an unsafe nose gear indication when she started configuring at 8 NM. The flight did an immediate single-engine go-around and informed the SOF and tower. The tower reported seeing two good landing lights, which indicated that all landing gears were down and locked. As the flight reset for a second single-engine approach, Capt Vitas cleared her wingman to don his night vision goggles and rejoin to route formation to confirm the nose gear was down and locked. When her wingman reported that all three landing gears were down and locked and the tower again confirmed that both landing lights were illuminated, Capt Vitas landed, taxied, and shut down at the end of the runway. Capt Vitas’ handling of these multiple night emergencies prevented the possible loss of a valuable combat aircraft..



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74th Fighter Squadron  
23rd Fighter Group  
Pope AFB, NC