

Aircrew Safety

Award of Distinction

While recovering his F-16 from a night Red Flag sortie, Maj Jansons encountered a gear problem during his approach to Nellis AFB. One normally gets a red light in the gear handle while the gear are in transit and three green indications without a red light in the handle when the gear are down and locked. In Maj Jansons' case, he had a red light and no gear position indications. He correctly analyzed the problem as a serious gear malfunction and coordinated with air traffic control for a block of altitude and holding airspace 15 miles north of base. With little room for error due to his low fuel state, Maj Jansons' situation was complicated by the impending return of over 60 Red Flag aircraft. He declared an in-flight emergency and then asked for a Night Vision Goggle (NVG) equipped pilot to look over his aircraft. Maj Jansons also coordinated with squadron supervision and the Supervisor of Flying (SOF) for assistance in determining the best course of action. The SOF initiated a conference call to get Lockheed engineering assistance. Meanwhile, Capt Simmons, flying an F-16 from the

160 FS, skillfully rejoined to Maj Jansons' wing and used his NVGs to determine that Maj Jansons had three gears out of the gear wells. Subsequently, the SOF directed Maj Jansons to raise the gear in accordance with instructions from Lockheed engineers. Upon raising the gear, Capt Simmons reported that the gear did not move. IAW the technical order and knowing that there was a potential for the gear to collapse upon touchdown, Maj Jansons put the gear handle back down and then prepared for a night, visual approach-end arrestment to the non-instrument runway at Nellis. While an approach-end arrestment is difficult because it is infrequently executed, Maj Jansons night attempt was even more difficult due to the lack of normal airspeed, angle of attack instrument references for landing, a landing light to illuminate the runway and approach-end cable, and because he could not go around and reattempt the approach due to his fuel state. Despite these challenges, Maj Jansons successfully landed his aircraft and engaged the approach-end cable without incident. Maj Jansons' flawless airmanship and decision making, coupled with the superb airmanship and assistance of Capt Simmons, saved a 25 million dollar Air Force asset.



Maj Juris L. Jansons, 64th Agressors, 57th Wing, Nellis AFB, Nevada, and Capt Travolis A. Simmons, 160th Fighter Sqdn., 187th Fighter Wing, Montgomery, Alabama

Flightline Safety

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On 04 November, a maintenance team performed an operational checkout (retraction) on the main landing gear (MLG) of F-15E aircraft 89-0474. During the checkout, Amn Sawtelle discovered the left strut anti-skid harness showing signs of potential chaffing. He informed all personnel to postpone further checks to allow additional investigation. He then discovered the scissor linkage on the left strut, used to prevent overextension of the inner strut as-

sembly, was installed inverted. Amn Sawtelle immediately notified his expediter of this discrepancy, which led to coordination between maintenance organizations to correct the fault. The identification of this discrepancy prevented severe damage to the left MLG actuator, rigid link, upper and lower jury links, anti-skid electrical wiring harness, and a possible catastrophic landing gear strut or brake failure. Amn Sawtelle's exceptional actions displayed his alertness, technical prowess, and strong commitment to the 4 FW mission. He eliminated any possible damage to the \$216,000 strut assembly, and quite possibly, he prevented a \$44 million F-15E aircraft mishap and injury to the aircrew.



Amn Shawn D. Sawtelle, 4th Aircraft Maintenance Sqdn., 4th Fighter Wing, Seymour Johnson AFB, North Carolina

Ground Safety

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T Sgt Campbell was observing Aft Optical Bench (AOB) maintenance in the Airborne Laser clean room. After noticing that current wire wrapping did not appear to meet Air Force and contractor standards, he researched and suggested implementation of Air Force Instruction standards. The contractor reviewed the procedures and concluded that TSgt Campbell was correct and implemented a change on the spot. TSgt Campbell's consistent attention to detail not only reduced foreign object damage potential and electrical wire chaffing in the \$5 million AOB, but also, if left undiscovered, could have caused equipment damage and put the flight crew in harm's way. He followed up on corrective actions to ensure they were incorporated into the engineering drawings and met FAA certifications. Ultimately TSgt Campbell's discovery saved more than 300 man-hours of rework to the AOB and

the safety hazard associated with it. Additionally, while training five subcontractors on Hydraulic Test Stand operations, he performed a prior-to-use inspection on the test stand as part of the training operation, revealing loose and malfunctioning equipment control knobs. He repaired the knobs and was able to continue the operation, only to discover a leaking fuel line which he also repaired. His quick thinking and swift action resulted in the correction of a dangerous fuel leak and permitted the training of the subcontractors despite the equipment's condition. In addition, TSgt Campbell inspected a chiller unit slated for use in the Systems Integration Lab. A thorough inspection led to the identification of incorrect weld and solder joints, the installation of incorrect hardware, an electrical system that was not isolated from possible water contact, a broken wire, and unsupported wiring harnesses. TSgt Campbell's identification of these problems as well as the hydraulic test stand problems were immediately elevated to senior leadership for long-term fixes and to prevent further equipment damage or program delays.



TSgt James L. Campbell, Jr., 31st Test and Evaluation Sqdn., Edwards AFB, California

Pilot Safety

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The sortie was briefed as an instrument check, with Lt Col Holdaway as the Flight Examiner. Ground ops, takeoff, and the initial portion of the check ride were uneventful. During the final instrument pattern at a nearby Navy airfield with Col Holdaway flying in the chase position, the Master Caution, Hydraulic, and Utility B warning lights illuminated. Col Holdaway requested that the other aircraft do a visual inspection of his jet while coordinating an immediate Return to Base (RTB) to Langley. The chase aircraft did not observe any hydraulic leaks, but during the RTB, the left and right Pump lights started to flicker, and the utility hydraulic pressure gauge indicated a drop in pressure of the utility hydraulic system. Col Holdaway slowed and configured the jet before losing complete utility hydraulic pressure. A short

time later, the right generator also failed which automatically activated the emergency generator and fuel boost pump. As the utility pressure continued to decrease to zero, Col Holdaway lost power to the control stick boost pitch compensator due to a failure in the hydraulic switchover valve. This failure placed the hydro-mechanical flight control system into its emergency settings for both roll and pitch ratios. The emergency generator also failed at this time due to complete loss of utility hydraulic pressure, so Col Holdaway reduced the electrical load to the minimum practical and pulled power on the right engine to idle, suspecting an imminent failure of the right airframe mounted accessory drive. Col Holdaway continued his approach, successfully completing a single-engine approach-end arrestment with degraded flight controls, complete failure of his utility hydraulic system, and a single generator. Lt Col Holdaway's quick actions, extensive systems knowledge, and smart decision making allowed him to safely recover a severely crippled aircraft and preserve a valuable combat asset.



Lt Col Jonathan A. Holdaway, 1st Fighter Wing, Langley AFB, Virginia