

Aircrew Safety

Award of Distinction

Capt Dickens, student pilot, and 1Lt Conrad, student Weapon Systems Officer, were on initial takeoff as number two of a two ship F-15E formal training syllabus sortie, when the landing gear would not retract. The crew also noted a Utility Hydraulic Circuit A caution light at the same time. The crew turned towards the fuel dump area, coordinated a rejoin with the lead aircraft, and began to run the four different checklists required to safely recover the aircraft. Since the aircraft was configured with external wing tanks, the crew was also required to run the Emergency Fuel Transfer/Dump checklist in order to reduce to a gross weight compatible with the BAK 12 arresting gear. After completing all required emergency actions, the crew set up for a visual straight-in and approach

end arrestment. Capt Dickens flew a flawless approach and landing, successfully engaging the approach end BAK-12 at 142 KCAS. After coming to a stop, the aircraft began to roll back, which Capt Dickens countered with a small power increase. As the aircraft rolled back, it began a violent, uncommanded swing to the right. After turning nearly 135 degrees to the right, the aircraft then began to roll back towards the left edge of the runway. Quickly realizing that the aircraft might depart the runway, Capt Dickens pulled the Emergency Brake/Steer handle and applied wheel brakes in time to stop the impending departure. Emergency response personnel were then able to safely approach the aircraft to assist the crew in a safe shutdown and cable extraction. The superior knowledge, excellent crew coordination, and expeditious, correct actions of Capt Dickens and 1Lt Conrad led to the safe recovery of a valuable combat asset and ensured the safety of the aircrew and ground personnel.

Capt Richard R. Dickens, 1Lt Christopher E. Conrad, 333rd Fighter Sqdn., 4th Fighter Wing, Seymour Johnson AFB, North Carolina



Flight Line Safety

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As part of his duties as flight line expediter, SSgt Double dispatched several personnel to act as wing and tail walkers for a tow team operation. He then repositioned his vehicle to watch the team push an A-10A into the phase hangar. The fact that this hangar had recently been converted into an A-10A phase dock, coupled with the congestion created by a wide variety of support equipment in the hangar, made this operation stand out to SSgt Double as one with a greater than normal potential for a mishap.

As he watched from his vehicle, Sgt Double assessed that the newly trained tow vehicle operator could benefit from some additional assistance and training to safely push the aircraft back into the hangar. He signaled the tow team supervisor to stop the operation and then got in the cab of the tow vehicle with the driver and talked him through this complicated task. Sgt Double's quick action that utilized and promoted the Operational Risk Management process may have prevented a costly aircraft mishap. More importantly, his action as a supervisor provided valuable training to one of the Group's inexperienced flight line personnel and served as an example for the other maintainers that witnessed his actions. SSgt Double's leadership and initiative will have lasting effects for the 23rd Fighter Group.

SSgt John R. Double, 23rd Aircraft Maint. Sqdn., 23rd Fighter Group, Pope AFB, North Carolina



Ground Safety

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A-10 aircraft number 78-0688 ground aborted for inoperable anti-skid. SSgt Okerlund, SrA Drocea, and A1C Bynum were dispatched and trouble shot the system to a popped landing gear circuit breaker. Their knowledge of Kapton arcing danger prompted them to immediately begin troubleshooting to find the root cause of the problem and not settle for simply resetting the circuit breaker. When their shift ended, they briefed the situation and their troubleshooting progress to their swing shift counterparts. SSgt Cline and SrA Evans took over the search for the exact cause and narrowed the problem down further to a section of wire between the landing gear control valve and the landing gear relay box. After a full shift of troubleshooting, the swing-shifters gave a turnover to SSgt Okerlund,

SrA Drocea, and A1C Bynum once again. Continued troubleshooting led SSgt Okerlund and his crew to trace wires from panel W-2 up to the landing gear relay box in panel F-40. While tracing wires in panel F-40, they discovered burnt wires behind the cabin air duct next to the left system hydraulic reservoir. The damaged wires proved to be the culprit and the team removed and replaced the bad section of wire to correct the original problem and return the aircraft to service. They then notified their supervisors and the QA office to get the word out to the rest of the A-10 community via a cross tell message from ACC/DRA10 that there is a flaw in the routing of this particular wire bundle. The wires were routed too close to a heat source and a one-time inspection was issued throughout the fleet. The superb team work, dedication and strict adherence to technical data of all involved, heightened the awareness of a potential fleet-wide chaffing problem, saved this war fighting asset and possibly, even more valuable, a life.

SSgt Denes P. Okerlund, SrA Thomas G. Drocea, SSgt Jamie J. Cline, A1C Daniel A. Bynum, SrA Jarrett M. Evans, 23rd Aircraft Maint. Sqdn., 23rd Fighter Group, Pope AFB, North Carolina



Pilot Safety

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Lt Howland, an F-15C wingman with less than 100 hours in the aircraft, launched out as number four on a radar trail departure for a Mission Qualification Training sortie, with weather just above his minimums. Following an afterburner takeoff, Lt Howland noticed his landing gear would not retract. He immediately reduced power to continue a safe climb while keeping airspeed below maximum gear limits, simultaneously proceeding with remaining checklist procedures. After confirming the gear would not raise, he reported the situation to his instructor pilot and leveled off in clear airspace, allowing the IP to effect a rejoin and look over the aircraft. Once the IP determined all three gear were down, the two-ship flew to a holding fix and initiated emergency fuel dumping with the gear down. Lt Howland then noticed all fuel in his three external tanks was trapped, failing to transfer because of a landing gear circuit breaker that would not reset. The flight declared an emergency, ran the appropriate checklists for the fuel problem, and contacted the SOF. With 12,000 pounds of trapped fuel, the SOF calculated that Lt Howland's aircraft was too heavy to take an ap-

proach end cable, due to higher-than-normal approach speed, and also too heavy to stop on the wet runway for the same reason. The IP subsequently noticed an abnormal gear door configuration while Lt Howland reported the illumination of an anti-skid braking caution light, compounding his problem and further reducing his options. Additionally, jettisoning external tanks with gear stuck down is discouraged by the Dash-1 due to the possibility of aircraft damage. While the SOF consulted multiple experts, Lt Howland completed the checklist items for the anti-skid braking caution light, and carefully adjusted the internal fuel to the lowest practical level for existing conditions. The SOF then advised the aircraft to take the approach end cable. Heavy weight and in poor weather, Lt Howland executed a perfect landing. He engaged the approach end cable precisely at the BAK-12 barrier's maximum airspeed limit for a heavyweight Eagle, bringing the aircraft to a full stop with no damage. Lt Howland, along with his IP and SOF, expertly handled multiple EPs in challenging weather conditions, ensuring the safe recovery of a multi-million dollar combat asset.

Lt Ryan A. Howland, 58th Fighter Sqdn., 33rd Fighter Wing, Eglin AFB, Florida

