



## Power and Power Lines

A pilot and pilot under instruction (PUI) were on a Naval Air Training and Operating Procedures Standardization (NATOPS) check flight in a T-34C Turbo-Mentor. The PUI experienced difficulty executing simulated high-altitude power loss (HAPL) descents to an unprepared field. The instructor pilot (IP) concluded, but did not announce, that the flight was not going to be counted as a NATOPS check but rather as a NATOPS warm-up. The PUI had reached the same conclusion and announced, after several attempts at the maneuver, that he guessed he'd be "doing this again tomorrow."

On a final maneuver of the flight, the PUI initiated one more simulated HAPL to an unprepared field. Bordering the eastern edge of the selected field were power lines running north/south, extending to a height of 126 feet. The PUI maneuvered the T-34C to land to the south, paralleling the power lines, with about 500 feet of lateral separation from the lines.

The PUI neared the final portion of the HAPL at 100 feet above the ground with 80 knots airspeed. He then executed a waveoff by maintaining a 30-degree angle of bank to the right and by pulling the nose up aggressively—while NOT adding full power. The IP was focusing on the power lines and evaluating the projected touchdown point of the aircraft as the PUI initiated his waveoff. The IP was not "shadowing" the PUI on the controls during the final stages of the maneuver.

On climbout, the rudder shakers activated rapidly and the IP took the controls. He placed the power control lever full forward and rolled wings level. When full power kicked in, the aircraft departed controlled flight with a left yaw and roll. After 60 degrees of turn in the departure, the IP regained control of the plane and began a climbout at 23 units angle of attack. The PUI called out, "Power lines," on the intercom. The IP, seeing only

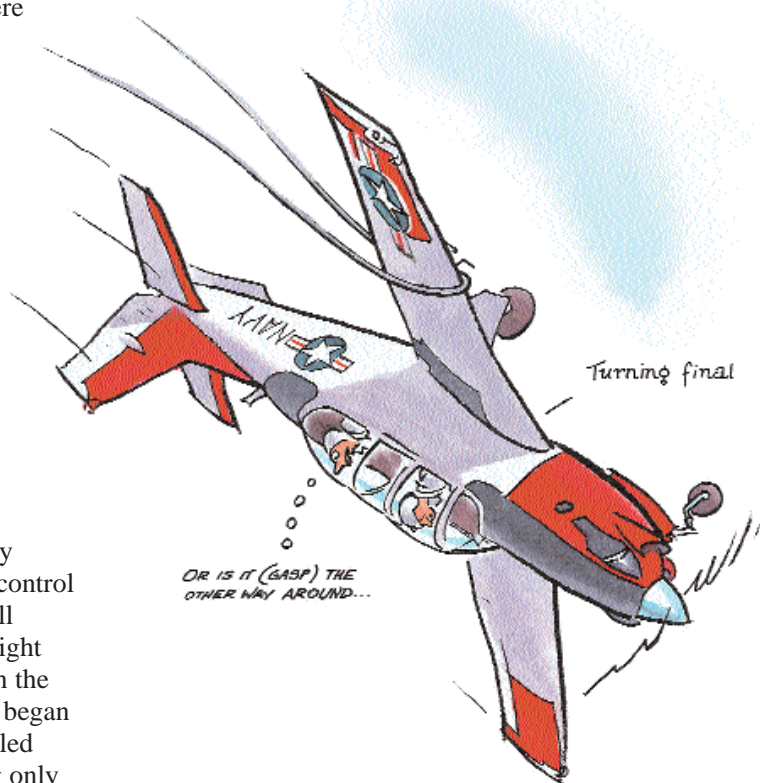
the power lines and not the tension wires which were higher and smaller, said, "We're climbing. We're going to clear them."

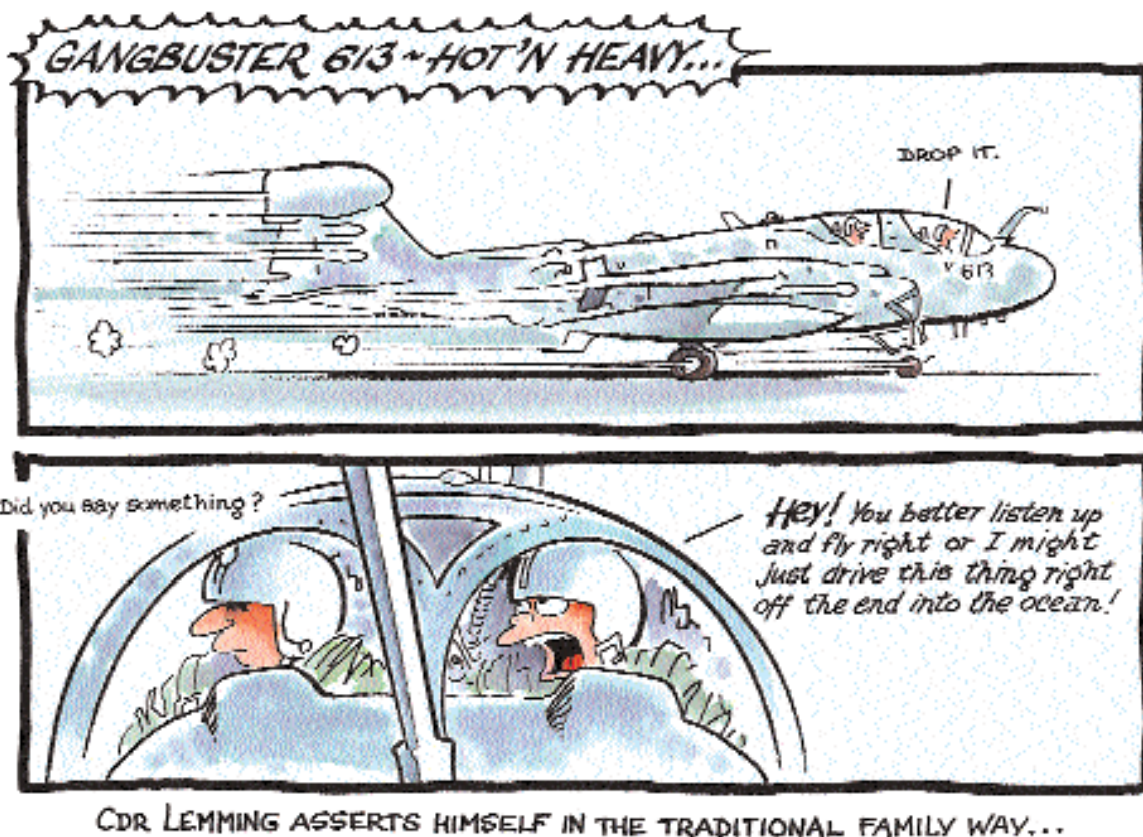
The left wing impacted the tension wires which caused the T-34C to roll inverted and crash into the ground. The IP exited the aircraft and seeing the PUI still seated inside the plane attempted to open the canopy. Crash damage required the IP to smash the canopy to extract the PUI, who had suffered fatal injuries from blunt trauma during the impact. The IP had minor injuries.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

**Woe is us! Basic air work and situational awareness took a holiday. There were contributing factors. The PUI had a documented history of aggressive maneuvering while using less than maximum available power during climbouts in the T-34C. The IP, it turns out, did not receive adequate standardized local training as a T-34C NATOPS instructor. The PUI made incorrect control inputs in the climbout—not adding full power—and didn't realize a stall was imminent. The PUI was allowed to get too low and slow. The IP didn't have his hands resting on or around the controls, which increased reaction time. And being very low to the ground, time**





CDR LEMMING ASSERTS HIMSELF IN THE TRADITIONAL FAMILY WAY...

was a critical factor. Command doctrine had no specified altitude minimums for the HAPL maneuver. Also, why make an approach to a field so close to power lines?

A sorry show—and tragic, too.

## Over the Overrun and Into the Mud

The crew of an EA-6B *Prowler* was landing following a brief functional check flight. Winds were variable, the runway was wet and the *Prowler* was at heavy gross weight. The pilot decided to perform a minimum rate of descent landing but touched down long and fast.

On the runway, realizing the aircraft was not decelerating properly, the pilot called for the electronic countermeasures officer (ECMO) in the right seat to lower the arresting hook. (The hook can be lowered from either crew position, but due to the *Prowler's* nose wheel steering design and the position of the hook release handle, standard practice is for ECMO 1 to lower the hook during high pilot workloads, such as struggling to keep a jet on the runway in wet weather conditions.) The ECMO apparently didn't hear this command. He also thought the pilot would be able to stop the EA-6B on the runway and did not drop the hook.

After passing the long field arresting gear, the pilot again called for the hook to be dropped. The ECMO lowered the hook and the *Prowler* engaged the overrun gear, after which the aircraft left the prepared surface and sank eight inches into the wet ground of the overrun. Continuing forward, the *Prowler* struck a concrete approach light fixture that was flush with the surface. This collapsed the nose gear and damaged the aircraft's

nose, centerline store and engines.

Grampaw Pettibone says:



An old axiom goes something like this: Don't worry about what you're going to do IF trouble rears its ugly head. Worry about what you're going to do WHEN it does.

The pilot was high and fast for landing on a wet runway, but it appears his aircrew had total confidence in his ability to bring the bird to a safe stop. That's OK. But the landing "went sour" and so did communications, while the red flag of complacency went up the pole.

The EA-6B rolled past the long field gear and the pilot called again for the hook, which was lowered and, happily, worked as advertised in the overrun area. Damage would have been minimal except for the *Prowler* sinking into the mud. At least nobody got hurt.

Another note: on rollout, the pilot noticed standing water at the intersection with another runway and released brakes to avoid skidding until cleared of the intersection. This contributed to increased stopping distance. Turns out that standing water due to rain is common at this airfield and other fliers routinely release their brakes until they're through it. The caretakers have been asked to correct this.

In the meantime, expect trouble so you'll be ready for it. If it doesn't arrive today, it may tomorrow, or the day after or . . . .